

*Art and the Early Christian Imagination*¹

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I am very honoured to have been invited to speak at the inauguration of this new journal on Eastern Christian Art. I am sure it will become an important place to publish, and will encourage serious study of early Christian art among specialists in eastern Christianity and early Islam. I hope some of that study will also be comparative, and that it will bring together studies in Jewish, Christian and Islamic art and not be afraid to address the problems of using and integrating the study of both texts and images. Almost as I speak there is a day conference happening in Newcastle on the very theme – ‘Archaeology, art and text in Byzantium’, with the specific purpose of bringing historians, art historians and archaeologists together to debate the issues and the nature of their evidence. That use of ‘text’ instead of, say, ‘literature’, is incidentally deliberate – an indication that art historians are in charge. An equally popular current formulation, and indeed the title of a respected journal in the field, is ‘Word and Image’. The suggestion in both cases is that for bringing words and images (or art and texts) together in an integrated way poses something of a problem. I want in this lecture to challenge that assumption, and the idea that words, or ‘texts’, somehow exist in opposition to visual images. Some people evidently thought so in late antiquity and later, and in our own case words and pictures may seem to belong to two different academic domains and disciplines. Historians and literary scholars may not use visual art very well, and art historians are sometimes rather critical of their failings. But art history in my experience has become more and more contextualized in recent years, while cultural history, drawing on images as well as texts, has become an accepted genre in our period. This lecture will argue that we can rarely do justice to either word or image unless we learn how to bring them together.

I have to confess that I was not trained as an art historian myself. But a look round my bookshelves

has brought home to me just how many art history books I have managed to collect over the years, covering the period from the early Christian period to the end of Byzantium and later. That cannot be an accident. It can only mean that visual evidence, like archaeology, is now indispensable for anyone pretending to be a historian of our period. In my case the habit arose, in all probability, from my fortunate discovery early in my academic career of Corippus’s Latin panegyric on the Emperor Justin II, four books of Latin hexameters written in Constantinople, and a most wonderful and remarkable repository of information about late antique imperial art and symbolism². It was probably also helped by the fact that for many years I was in the habit of working in the library of the Warburg Institute in London, with its unique open access and cataloguing system which places art history books next to history and texts. At any rate, I have consciously tried to make sure for a long time now that I have on my shelves as full a coverage as possible of the most reliable studies and the best reproductions of the repertoire of early Christian, late antique and Byzantine art – there are many pitfalls for the historian who wants to use visual evidence, and the first thing is to try not to fall into obvious mistakes of attribution, dating or interpretation. But after all it was from the discipline of art history, with Alois Riegl, that the notion of ‘decline’ in the later Roman empire was questioned and the modern conception of late antiquity was born³. We have a lot to be grateful for in this alone.

¹ This is a lecture given at the inauguration of the journal *Eastern Christian Art* in Leiden on 9 December 2004; it is substantially unrevised.

² Cameron 1976.

³ For Riegl, see Ghilardi 2002, 117-146.

There are two strands to what follows: first, the question, why has early Christian art seemed to present a problem? And second, why is early Christian art important?

I should make clear that by 'early Christian art' I embrace the definition in the new journal, where Eastern Christian Art is qualified by the words 'in its late antique and Islamic contexts'. We could debate about the meanings of 'early Christian', or about 'late antique', or indeed about how far early Islam itself belongs in the world of late antiquity, but meanwhile I applaud the editors for their evident desire for inclusivity.

I. THE PROBLEMS

Early Christian art has certainly given some trouble both to contemporaries and to modern historians, and this is still apparent in the literature. There is also the question of the status of the discipline itself. As recently as the 1980s it was still possible to write of the study of early Christian art that 'it is only comparatively recently that scholars within the discipline have given up an antiquarian or even a romantic approach to the monuments of the early Church and have begun to consider them as works of art and archaeology; and only very recently have students started to view them within the context of Church History'⁴. In other words, the writer argues, visual art is not an add-on to religious history; it *is* religious history.

Things have moved on a good deal in the direction of the recognition of the importance of the material and its integral importance for the historian of religion and culture. But there are still problems with early Christian art. Perhaps I can list some of the issues, before moving to a brief discussion:

⁴ See Sister Charles Murray, in a useful survey article, Murray 1982, 167.

⁵ From Stevenson 1987, 292.

⁶ Murray 1977; see also Corby Finney 1994.

⁷ Eusebius and *Logos*-theology: Walker 1990, chapters 3 and 4; the Iconoclasts regarded Eusebius as opposed to images on the basis of a letter on the subject to the Empress Constantia attributed to him: see Gero 1981.

⁸ Elsner 1998, 155: 'the earliest Christian catacombs and sarcophagi ... represented a careful construction of minority identity in response to a perceived hostile environment and a persecuting state'; Finney 1994, 141-274.

⁹ Contra, Matthews 1993.

1. The first problem arose quite simply out of the emphasis put on the second commandment, 'Thou shalt make no graven images'. Many modern historians of the early Christianity have taken this literally, and assumed a hostility towards art on the part of the early church. Certainly at times in the late antique period, as also later, voices were raised against the artistic representation of religious images. In the early fourth century, for example, canon 37 of the Council of Elvira in southern Spain (ca A.D. 305) stated: 'There shall be no pictures in church, lest what is revered and adored be depicted on the walls'⁵. But there is still debate as to the extent of this opposition, and Sister Charles Murray and others have effectively demolished the older view that the early church as a whole was opposed to religious art⁶.
2. To this one can add the dilemma posed by a religion which can make the extraordinary statement that 'the *Word* was God'. If the *Logos* stood at the centre of early Christian accounts of what Christianity was, it also enshrined future complexity in any relation between words and images. Contrary to some scholars, I would argue against the view that those who like Eusebius of Caesarea are identified with a *Logos* theology were also necessarily opposed to images⁷. It was far from standing in the way of an emphasis on image and symbol, for example, in which Eusebius's writing abounds. But there is no doubt that the articulation of the relation between words and images was always likely to be a very difficult one, and so it proved.
3. Thirdly, Christian art developed rather late, or at least we have no clear examples before the third century. The former very early datings of catacomb art for instance are no longer favoured, nor could it now be maintained that Christian art developed out of catacomb art. Christian art did not get going until the third century and later⁸. But this late appearance of Christian art needs to be explained.
4. There has also been hot debate about the origins of Christian art, whether it developed out of existing Graeco-Roman traditions, and if so, whether or not it was based on imperial art⁹, whether it was heavily dependent on Jewish prototypes, especially evinced in cycles of manuscript illustrations, whether it was a kind of new

creation, or whether its origins were somehow connected with a Gnostic background.

5. A further problem lies in the actual identification of some examples as 'Christian'¹⁰. Strangely, perhaps, it is by no means always clear whether certain images are Christian or not. For many scholars nowadays, this also makes the traditional idea of an academic discipline known as 'Christian archaeology' rather suspect, for it seems to start from assumptions which may not be justified, and to offer a strong temptation to over-interpretation. One of the themes in the new journal will surely be to find ways of identifying 'Christian', 'Jewish' and 'Islamic' elements in the art of late antiquity.

As late antiquity drew on, art itself became problematic. To these existing problems may therefore be added sharper questions which Christians themselves articulated as Christian art became more and more accepted and developed. In particular, the status of Christian religious images began to be debated from the sixth century onwards as religious images ('icons') became more common. These questions feature in the context of Christian anti-Jewish dialogues in the late seventh century, and in the continuing debates about Christology and theopaschism. Also in the later seventh century Anastasius of Sinai strikingly employed pictures to illustrate his theological argument, memorably discussed by Anna Kartsonis¹¹; and against this context, in A.D. 692 the Council in Trullo or Quinisext issued a famous canon forbidding the depiction of Christ in the symbolic form of a Lamb, as implicitly denying His humanity. Instead, it commanded the human representation of Christ. By the depiction of Christ in human form, the canon said, 'we comprehend ... the sublimity of the humiliation of God's Word, and are guided to the recollection of His life in the flesh, His Passion and His salutary Death and the salvation which has thence accrued to the world'¹².

6. During the eighth and ninth centuries the arguments against religious images were forcibly put and the debate became more and more elaborate. Art itself was debated, along with the very nature of representation, and the debate produced passionate defences of visual art. The respective merits of words and pictures in terms of their capacity to depict the truth became a main topic of

discussion, not unlike the debates of today between art historians and textual scholars¹³. It is a question for us whether Byzantine Iconoclasm was really 'about art'; but it certainly led to a heated argument about the nature of Christian art. During the proceedings of the Second Council of Nicaea in A.D. 787, the supporters of religious images argued that religious painting was not some recent innovation: rather, it went back to Apostolic times and represented unbroken, even if unwritten, tradition¹⁴. The same standard quotations from Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa on the emotional power of images were drawn on in turn by Germanos, John of Damascus and several other iconophile writers. The painter and the writer were contrasted, and the rival claims of words and images debated. Already in the seventh century it had been argued that images were superior, because they could not be falsified, and that images spoke to the heart, whereas words only spoke to the ears¹⁵.

This was a debate about how God can be known. So passionate was the argument, and so much scholarly energy was expended in producing new and clinching arguments on both sides that it generated an extraordinary degree of encyclopaedism. Florilegia (collections of proof texts) were not new, but the use of such florilegia drawn from the writings of the Fathers proliferated to the point where the Seventh Council (II Nicaea) in 787 actually refused to receive evidence except from whole books¹⁶. Lists of proof texts and authorized citations were drawn both to attack and to defend images – texts being

¹⁰ See Elsner 1998, 154: '[Christian art emerged] entirely out of the forms and themes of its pagan environment'. Once begun, in the fourth century, it 'rapidly began to acquire an increasingly standardized iconography and a content more and more suited to the demands of theology and dogma' (155). Even so, there remained much scope for ambiguity and for over-interpretation by modern scholars; Christian art is not to be thought of as straightforwardly succeeding pagan art, nor necessarily as more 'spiritual': see Elsner 1995; id. 1997.

¹¹ Kartsonis 1986.

¹² Trans. Mango 1972, repr. 1986, 139-140.

¹³ See Sansterre 1994.

¹⁴ Mansi 217C-D.

¹⁵ Sansterre 1994.

¹⁶ See Alexakis 1996, especially chapter 1.

used as supplement and justify visual art. The intensity of the argument also resulted in the faking of alleged patristic authorities. One of the more curious features of this is the elaborate set of 'rules of evidence' drawn up at the Sixth and Seventh Ecumenical Councils to ensure the authenticity of texts quoted during the proceedings. Neither side was averse to sheer fabrication.

The intense debate about art in this period encouraged other complexities. Why, for instance, did religious images in Byzantine art carry inscriptions identifying their subject? This practice brings vividly to the fore the problem of word and image. Images also acquired their own life – flying about, according to some stories, or bleeding, or striking down miscreants¹⁷. Not only were some images thought to be of miraculous origin; they also worked miracles themselves. This started before Iconoclasm, but it is as if the end of the controversy licensed images to occupy a new and luxuriant imaginative space.

7. In the Iconoclastic debate, the terms 'Saracen' and 'Judaizer' were thrown around with abandon. Iconophiles accused their rivals of being like the Jews or the 'Saracens', while the iconoclast reformers took up the alleged complaints of Jewish critics and complained that images were idolatrous. John of Damascus was one who was accused of being 'Saracen-minded'. The relation, if any, between Byzantine iconoclasm and the near-contemporary iconoclast edict of Yazid II in the 720s makes the whole episode even more problematic. So does the further dimension of apparent Christian iconoclasm within the Caliphate, as seen in the mosaics of some of the late antique churches in modern Jordan. It remains puzzling, even if no more, that John of Damascus, author of by far the most important Christian defence of images in the eighth century, lived and wrote entirely from within the

lands of the Umayyad caliphate¹⁸. Nor, of course, were Jews in late antiquity opposed to images; one of the most striking advances in recent years has been the exponential rise in the quantity of evidence of elaborately decorated late antique synagogues in Palestine¹⁹.

Such, then, are just some of the problems with early Christian art. And that is without going into the questions of the relation between Christian and Islamic art, or the influence, for instance, of Sasanian or Iranian elements in eastern Christian art. To me as a historian it seems a wonderfully rich field, and one that is inseparable from any theory of Christianisation.

You may notice that I have not so far used the word 'style'. One of the problems with early Christian art has been the dominance of considerations of style, or stylistic dating, over context. Indeed, when historians are only now and with considerable difficulty freeing themselves from determinist or triumphalist views of the rise of Christianity, it is not surprising if early Christian art too has presented similar temptations. I suspect for example that the idea, found in the work of Ernst Kitzinger and others, that Christian art was somehow more spiritual, more ethereal, more 'heavenward'²⁰, is still very much present in the minds of those who flock in such vast numbers to icon exhibitions today. But as Jás Elsner has shown, one cannot really make this stylistic distinction between Christian and pagan art in late antiquity²¹. If late antiquity was indeed an 'age of spirituality', to borrow the title of the first of the three great exhibitions on Byzantine art held at the Metropolitan Museum over the last 25 years, it was not only *Christian* spirituality that characterised it²². Another familiar thesis of Kitzinger, namely that the growth in popularity of religious images represented a kind of welling up of 'popular religion'²³, is based on the very deep feeling among modern scholars until recently that Christian art was not a natural or even a respectable aspect of Christianity in its early stages. It is part of a shared Reformation heritage as well. But the reality was otherwise. The very early Christians did not have safe public spaces to adorn or institutional wealth to commission works of art; their priorities were elsewhere, and they have left little material record. That, rather than any intrinsic hostility, is the main reason for the apparently late development of

¹⁷ See Munitiz et alii 1997; in a parallel development pagan images became problematic to Christian observers: James 1996, 12-20. Imperial images also shared in this general sense of unease: see Eastmond 2003, 73-85.

¹⁸ See Griffith 1990.

¹⁹ For a conspectus see Levine 1981.

²⁰ See Kitzinger 1977.

²¹ Elsner 1995.

²² See Catalogue New York 1977.

²³ Kitzinger 1954, 85-150.

Christian art. Once they had a physical presence with buildings of their own in an atmosphere of support instead of suspicion, they were as ready as anyone else to turn to artistic representation.

II. WHY WAS CHRISTIAN ART IMPORTANT?

Just as there were those who argued that Christians should not need to visit holy places or venerate relics, so some objected to the representation of holy persons in visual art. The Second Commandment seemed clear enough. Yet early Christians were not constrained in other ways by Jewish precedent. Clearly, therefore, Christian art fulfilled a perceived need, or a felt desire. I would like to look now at some of the functions which visual art could fulfil for the developing sense of Christian selfhood.

My title contains the word 'imagination', and I want to argue that religion is indeed about imagination. In the case of Christianity we are accustomed to focus on doctrine, and especially so in the late antique period which was so dominated by developing theological understanding, and above all by Christology. It is possible to reverse the argument and see this as the problem. The great Christian writers of these centuries struggled with the verbal definition of belief; the entry with Constantine of the Roman emperors into church affairs defined itself round the attempt to prescribe correct belief; and this was a matter of deep and profound division and argument throughout the period. Equally, Christian differentiation from Judaism was expressed in terms of differences of belief and interpretation of Scripture; Scriptural exegesis occupied an enormous amount of attention in late antiquity for the same reasons; and when we turn to early Islam, it was Christian beliefs, such as the Sonship of Christ and the Virgin birth, which were condemned in the Quranic verses which asserted the superiority of Muslims over Christians. Just what problems this concentration on verbal definition can lead to is vividly illustrated in the late antique and patristic period. Religion consists of a whole complex of factors, including liturgy, the heart, emotion and imagination, some of which are only now beginning to be recognised as important by scholars of the early church. Visual art clearly belongs in this category, even though it was indeed used later to express doctrinal truth.

If we now accept that there were many forms of early Christianity, and that doctrine, as it was

shaped through influential writings and through the councils, was essentially an attempt at imposing unity on actual plurality, which was always in danger of escaping, we find that Christian art fits perfectly into this focus on Christian creative imagination. In this scenario there can be no single theory about the 'origins' of Christian art, since visual representation among early Christians will naturally have taken on as many and varied forms as did Christian writing. It was natural too that the earliest Christian art drew on the forms familiar from pagan art – and that it used classical themes, for example on sarcophagi, such as garlands, bacchic figures, victories and the like²⁴. If doctrine was slow to crystallise, then one would expect a similar lack of specificity in artistic representation, and a degree of overlap with pagan iconography. As examples one can easily think of Christ as Helios and Christ as Orpheus, and of the very slow appearance of any iconography of Mary before the late fourth and fifth centuries. But at the other end of the chronological spectrum, the Cypriot Neophytos the Recluse himself decorated the cave in the hills above Paphos, in which he spent more than fifty years, with painted pictures of holy scenes and holy persons, and of himself in the company of angels being lifted to heaven. In a neat illustration of the parallelism of the imaginative power of both the visual and the written word the same Neophytos, illiterate when he entered the monastery, composed an astonishing range of writings from Scriptural exegesis and praises of saints to contemporary history, poetry and monastic regulations. He had created a total world in which he was literally surrounded by the fruits of his own imagination²⁵.

I have referred to the canon of the Quinisext Council which forbade the symbolic depiction of Christ as a lamb, but in fact the content of Christian art was rarely if ever prescribed. We know surprisingly little as a rule about the process by which a given depiction came about, perhaps on the walls of a church, and even after Iconoclasm the Middle Byzantine scheme of church decoration was by no means as fixed as has been assumed. Art,

²⁴ Elsner 1998, 152-158, emphasising the rich repertoire of pagan religious iconography on which Christian artists inevitably drew.

²⁵ See Cormack 1985, 215-251; Galatariotou 1991.

then, like some forms of Christian literature, was very much open to the imagination. This is worth stressing.

Late antiquity was a period of intense creativity, which can be seen in social practice, in literature and in religious mentality. One example of this can be seen in the huge proliferation in the various narratives labelled apocryphal. The subject of Mary provides a good example, in the tales of her death and taking up to heaven. In a recent study Stephen Shoemaker writes of 'an efflorescence' of such tales in the late fifth and sixth centuries²⁶. Brian Daley puts it even more vividly; 'the figure of Mary emerged like a comet in Christian devotion and liturgical celebration throughout the world'²⁷. We could add the tales about Christ's descent into Hades, or about Constantine and Helena. Such tales in themselves, and the homiletic which drew on them, allowed comparatively unfettered imaginative flights, and this was also true of visual art. Visual art in fact, as particularly illustrated in the decorative cycles of later church buildings, allowed the development of a truly coherent system of Christian belief. As historians and patristic scholars, we have concentrated too much on more formal and doctrinally orientated writing. Art history is also too important to be left to art historians only. The danger is of closing one's eyes to the real impact of imaginative writing and pictorial representation in forming the ideas of late antique Christians.

I have also argued for the essentially figural nature of Christian thought²⁸. There was, I now think, a deep tension implicit in the development of Christianity into an institutionalised religion. On the one hand, it was necessary to clarify and formalise

the content of Christianity in the pursuit of unity and discipline. Councils and synods, and a wealth of theological writings, treatises, homilies and the like, sought to impose propositional truths. The ecumenical councils saw as their output credal statements agreed by the majority and enforced by sanctions. So doctrine was born. But on the other hand Christian faith worked through symbols and paradox, and thus the effort to impose propositional uniformity was constantly subverted. Typology fed into this, and even a consideration of patristic exegesis bears this out. For to modern eyes even the so-called 'literalist' exegesis of the Antiochene school is imaginative in the extreme, full of ingenious ploys and fictive argument. Once one moves into the world of writers like the authors of some of the so-called apocryphal writings, of Christian poets such as of course Ephraem Syrus, of hagiographers like the author of the *Life of Antony*, or hymnographers like Romanos, the figural nature of Christian thought and language is too obvious to ignore. Some current scholars are trying to explore this aspect of early Christian thought, especially Patricia Cox Miller attempting to uncover a specifically late antique poetics²⁹, or Georgia Frank in her study of the visual in hagiographical writing on pilgrimage, or Giselle de Nie in her studies of imagery in the writing of Gregory of Tours³⁰. To quote a passage from Gregory about a miracle story that has been expounded by de Nie, 'through the blindness of this man ... it was made most clear how the bishop of the heretics was covering the eyes of [men's] hearts with the miserable veil of his doctrine, so that no one would be able to contemplate the true Light with the eyes of faith' (*Hist.* 2.3)³¹. This is language familiar to anyone who has read even a little of the literature of late antique Christianity, and it is rooted in the New Testament texts on which it drew. It was only a small step to the attempt to render the mystery in artistic form. We need in fact to think in terms of a religious poetics, which found both verbal and visual expression. And we can in turn read the intellectual struggles of the iconoclastic period as vain efforts to square this powerful imaginative impulse with the propositional logic of Christological doctrine.

Vain efforts, because late antique Christians were accustomed through many writings, through homilies and through the liturgy itself to the ideas of mystery and hiddenness. All the senses were engaged, including the sense of smell. But Christians also longed to *see*, just as they longed to get close to

²⁶ See Shoemaker 2002, cf. 76 'late fifth century'; Daley 1998, e.g. 7 ff, with bibliography, and 9, 'by the second half of the sixth century it is clear that the story of Mary's transition from earth to heaven had come to be accepted as part of Christian tradition in both the Chalcedonian and the non-Chalcedonian Churches of the east'; Kartsonis 1986, discusses the similar complex of stories of Christ's descent into Hades.

²⁷ Daley 1998, 6.

²⁸ Cameron 1991.

²⁹ Cox Miller 2001.

³⁰ Frank 2000.

³¹ De Nie 1998, 67-68, eadem 2003, VII (the introductions to this collected volume is entitled 'Visions of the heart').

Christ or the saints by touch, through relics. There was no body of Christ to venerate, nor indeed of his mother Mary. Yet the second-century *Protevangelium* had already envisaged her as fed by angels. The bare record in the Gospels was not enough, and she acquired in the Christian imagination a miraculous passage and a heavenly afterlife. Christians also wanted to see what Christ had looked like, and so we get into the long story of their attempts to discover the true face of Christ, first the idealized type, then the bearded philosopher, then the miraculous likeness not made with hands or painted but impressed on cloth. The story of the face of Christ is as much a psychological quest as an art-historical investigation³². It is ironic, therefore, if predictable, that it should have led in Byzantine art to the evolution of painters' manuals laying down rules for artists – for after all, depicting the face of Christ was not like any ordinary artistic production; it was the ultimate attempt to grasp the truth that was by definition beyond grasp.

Thus the artistic imagination constantly tried to escape the constraints of propositional logic, and to give rein to the psychological and emotional sides of religious experience. The stories of miraculous images – icons which could speak, weep, or behave in other ways as if they were indeed alive – express the ultimate logic of this, as the image itself literally became what it represented.

But it was also natural in such circumstances that visual art should also be used sometimes precisely in the opposite way, to convey a doctrinal message. Especially after the ending of Iconoclasm in the ninth century, but also earlier, pictures could carry elaborately worked doctrinal messages³³. Complex narrative scenes such as the Transfiguration mosaic in the apse of St Catherine's monastery at Mt Sinai expressed doctrinal truths³⁴, and in a sense tried to reduce the emotional freedom of visual art by imposing a controlled language of motifs and symbols. Later Byzantine art went much further in this direction. Art of this kind needed as much exegesis as did a sacred text. Doctrine could also be expressed indirectly by depicting the councils at which it was proclaimed³⁵. Gradually a repertoire developed of recognized, though never totally standardized, depictions of religious personages. It was felt that after all a saint *should* be recognizable from his icon, that icons literally tell us how to identify the saint if he or she appears in person. And if it was allowed

that images depicted truth, it was reasonable to expect a more controlled iconographic repertoire. Thus the *Life* of the patriarch Nicephorus by Ignatius the deacon has the patriarch debating with the Iconoclast emperor the question of how angels should be depicted³⁶. Equally, some religious pictures needed exposition. Is this a mixing up of the visual and the intellectual? At any rate, homilists produced exegesis and *ekphrasis* of pictures just as they might do of scriptural texts. And so, we might say, the picture itself comes to stand as a text.

It hardly seems surprising, given such blurring of the distinction, if there should have been a reaction against the proliferation of images. For in a complete reversal of the Scriptural injunction, images now seemed genuinely in danger of taking over from the verbal authority of Scripture and the patristic tradition. Their capacity to convey truth was argued to be greater, because more direct, than that of mere words. They were harder to control, and therefore dangerous. But there was no early Christian Reformation. If Iconoclasm was to prevail, a far more thoroughgoing effort to exterminate images would have been required than was in fact attempted. And in a church whose liturgy and language were characterised by symbolism and mystery it would have been impossible as well as illogical to suppress the image. The subject of this new journal is highly appropriate. For the ending of Byzantine Iconoclasm meant not so much the 'Triumph of Orthodoxy'³⁷ as the victory of images.

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³² For this see MacGregor 2000.

³³ See for example Kessler 1991-92; Brubaker 1989, and see 28 f on images and text.

³⁴ For this mosaic see Elsner 1995, 99-123.

³⁵ See Walter 1970; id. 2000; cf. his comment in the preface to this collection: 'The Byzantine Church used pictures widely but discreetly for propaganda purposes' (Prologue, i).

³⁶ Trans. E.A. Fisher, in Talbot 1998, 98-100.

³⁷ This is how it was remembered in Byzantium; cf. the icon of that name in the British Museum, c. 1400: Buckton 1994, 129-130 (R. Cormack).

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Asia Minor Ampullae: Late Antique Pilgrim Flasks in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden

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To describe an object as a 'pilgrim flask' implies a vessel that held sacred contents and that came from a place of spiritual importance¹. The religious connotations of this term are clear, however, determining the meaning of pilgrim flasks in relation to specific historical circumstances requires contextual and typological analysis. Whilst the material culture of saint cults in Medieval Europe has been well investigated, pilgrim souvenirs from the eastern Mediterranean in Late Antiquity are less fully understood in terms of their relation to specific sites, and therefore their historical context². This article considers the decoration, fabric qualities and contextual aspects of a group of small, clay flasks – ampullae – whose production can be assigned to western Turkey in the second half of the sixth century A.D.

More prevalent than Asia Minor ampullae are flasks associated with St Menas that were manufactured in northwest Egypt from the late-fifth century A.D. Their occurrence in excavations at Alexandria and the pilgrim centre of Abu Mina, as well as distant sites such as the west of England and the Black Sea coast, offers information about numerous aspects of the Late Antique and early Byzantine period including trade routes and religious practices³. In addition to Menas flasks, there were a number of other wheel and mould-made flask-types manufactured in different parts of the Byzantine empire, especially Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor⁴. This catalogue presents a small group of ampullae whose form, decoration and circumstances of purchase link them to saints' shrines in western Asia Minor.

Among the extensive holdings of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, the Dutch national museum of antiquities in Leiden, are fifteen early Christian pilgrim flasks, mostly acquired in the nineteenth century⁵. Five of these are the clay, Menas type, including one with a male profile portrait and on the reverse a Greek inscription which describes the 'blessings of Menas'. Another flask is

made of lead and has a similar profile portrait of a curly-haired man on both sides. The remaining nine were bought in Turkey in the late-nineteenth century, although they are also under the remit of Egyptian antiquities. Eight of these can be identified as the Asia Minor type, known from other museum collections and occasionally found at excavations in western Turkey.

ASIA MINOR AMPULLAE

Both Menas and Asia Minor flasks were mould-made, but whereas Menas flasks have a round shape with handles added to the body and neck, Asia

¹ The term has also been adopted to describe the form rather than function of objects which are not necessarily related to pilgrimage. Wheel-made flasks from the Bronze Age have been called pilgrim flasks because of their similarity to medieval forms (Eriksson 1988). Clay flasks made in Egypt during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods are also called pilgrim flasks (Seif el-Din 1993).

² Pilgrim souvenirs from the late Middle Ages can often be identified with shrines from which they were acquired and can therefore be used to explore aspects of pilgrimage and saint cults during this period (see Spencer 1998).

³ For a bibliography of work concerned with Menas flasks, see Kiss 1989. Scholars have attempted to chart the distribution of Late Antique pilgrim flasks, see Lambert/Pedemonte Demeglio 1994. Excavated Menas flasks have recently been used to identify trade routes between the Byzantine Mediterranean and the West, see Harris 2003.

⁴ Little work has so far been done to identify and classify clay flask forms from this period. Art historians have concentrated on the metal flasks from Palestine, called Monza flasks because of the Italian church whose treasury holds a large collection, see Grabar 1958, and more recently Vikan 1995 and Engemann 2002. John Hayes described a prevalent wheel-made form of clay ampulla which may have originated from Palestine, see Hayes 1971. There are many types of mould-made ampullae however, and considerably more research is needed to identify where they came from.

⁵ I am grateful to Maarten Raven, Curator of Egyptian Antiquities, for allowing me to inspect and photograph the museum's pilgrim flasks.

Minor ampullae are smaller, oval-shaped, and have holes pierced into the top of the flask. They have been excavated in domestic, commercial, funerary and religious contexts at the cities of Aphrodisias, Ephesus, Pergamon, Sardis and other sites in western Turkey⁶. They have also been found at Athens, Jerusalem and the fortified settlement of Caričin Grad in the Balkans⁷. The cluster of finds in western Asia Minor and the Aegean coast suggests that ampullae were made in this region, and as with Menas flasks at Alexandria, were acquired by a relatively local market. The occurrence of ampullae in reliably-dated contexts has shown that they were produced in the late sixth and early seventh century⁸. Closer analysis of iconography and fabrics reveals the variety within this distinctive pottery form, and suggests that ampullae were produced and distributed at a number of different sites.

The relief decorations on Asia Minor ampullae feature a range of figures and faunal motifs; others have patterns of crosses, circles and architectural features. Art-historical investigation of early Christian pilgrim souvenirs has sought to identify production or distribution centres by relating images to the iconography of known saints, and using written sources that refer to the acquisition of 'sacred commodities' by pilgrims. When applied to Asia Minor ampullae, this approach has tended to overlook important features of the archaeological record including typological variety, similarities with other

pottery forms from the period, and circumstances of excavation. The city of Ephesus has often been posited as the production site of some ampullae on the basis of iconography and historical references, but this attribution does not account for the diversity of pictorial decoration, fabrics and moulds. The Rijksmuseum's ampullae show the range of clay qualities and mould designs within this pottery-form.

AMPULLAE IN THE RIJKSMUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN

Several museums in Europe and the United States possess examples or small groups of Asia Minor ampullae. The largest collection is at the Louvre in Paris, and was published by Catherine Metzger in 1981⁹. The majority of these were bequeathed by Paul Gaudin, a French engineer who was working in Turkey in the late nineteenth century. He donated 44 ampullae between 1896 and 1920, first examined and discussed by members of the *Société des Antiquaires de France*¹⁰. Gaudin, who was directing the construction of a railway line between Izmir and Turgutlu, took an interest in the archaeology of the region, later excavating at the Classical city of Aphrodisias, from where a number of statues were illegally exported to north-west Europe¹¹. The flasks that he obtained in the 1880s were said to come from Smyrna (modern-day İzmir), which in the final years of the nineteenth century had a large community of foreign diplomats, many of whom acquired antiquities for personal collections and museums in their home states¹².

Museums in Berlin, London, Moscow and Vienna received donations of ampullae in the late nineteenth century, and the examples in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden also came from collectors at this time. Three flasks were obtained by the Dutch vice-consul in Smyrna, Alfred van Lennep, who had assumed a role as a mediator in antiquities for the museum¹³. The others were bought in the 1880s by Stephanos Saloa Nicolaides in Smyrna and Troy¹⁴. Licensed by Ottoman authorities, European diplomats were able to purchase and export antiquities from the region with impunity. Although laws were introduced to prohibit the export of antiquities from Turkey, these were often contravened. Two crates containing statues and inscribed stelae which had been sent from Turkey by Van Lennep,

⁶ For eight flasks found at Aphrodisias, see Campbell 1988. Since this date there have been many more intact and fragmentary examples from this city (Christopher Ratté, personal correspondence). Those excavated at Sardis prior to 1985 were described by George Hanfmann, 1985.

⁷ Athens: Broneer 1932; Jerusalem: Maeir/Strauss 1995; Caričin Grad: Metzger 1984.

⁸ One of the best indicators of chronology is from Sardis, where ampullae have been found in Byzantine shop buildings which are known from numismatic evidence to have been destroyed and abandoned in the second decade of the seventh century AD (Hanfmann 1983).

⁹ Metzger 1981.

¹⁰ Michon 1899.

¹¹ Collignon 1906. Gaudin's activities at Aphrodisias were investigated by the former director of excavations, Dr Kenan Erim (Erim 1986, 37-45).

¹² The acquisition of antiquities by foreigners in Turkey and the compliance of the Ottoman authorities in the process is described in Schiffer 1999, 101-110.

¹³ Inventory numbers LKA 861, 1022, 1051. Van Lennep's role is mentioned in Halbertsma 2003, 148.

¹⁴ Inventory numbers S.288, 289, 290, 191, 286.

destined for Leiden, were recently retrieved from a shipwreck off the southeast coast of England; the objects are now thought to have been returned to Turkey¹⁵.

Three of the Leiden ampullae have figural decoration; two with images of horse-riders on both sides, the other has a seated man writing, and on the reverse, a standing man holding a book in front of him. Ampullae with figural decoration tend to have fairly regular dimensions – around 6.5-7 cm in height – although fabric colour and qualities can vary. The other Asia Minor ampullae at Leiden have non-figural designs with crosses and circle motifs, and these differ greatly in their fabric, form and proportions. It is first necessary to consider ways in which the iconography of ‘Horse-rider’ and ‘Evangelist’ designs have been interpreted before noting the variety in moulds and clay qualities of the non-figural ampullae.

‘HORSE-RIDERS’ AMPULLAE

The Louvre has six examples of the ‘Horse-riders’ ampulla which can be divided into two groups on the basis of slight iconographic differences¹⁶. On one side, a male figure rides a horse, which in the first group of flasks seems to be galloping as its hind legs are raised above its front legs. The man has a tunic to above his knees, and also wears a belt. He is turned to give a frontal pose and his right arm is raised, holding a circular object that is often obscured by the suspension holes bored into the top of the flask. In the second group, the horseman is holding an object across his right shoulder that has been identified as an axe. On the reverse side, a female horse-rider turns to face frontally, and in the second group the woman is riding ‘side-saddle’. She wears a voluminous cloak and a veil or hood, and in most examples holds an unidentifiable, cylindrical-shaped object with both hands.

In his 1909 catalogue of Byzantine antiquities in Berlin, Oskar Wulff suggested that the ‘Horse-riders’ design may show Mary and Joseph on the Flight into Egypt¹⁷. French epigrapher Louis Robert agreed, arguing that the axe symbolised Joseph’s profession as a carpenter and that the object in the female rider’s hands was the infant Christ¹⁸. He postulated that the flasks were made at St Mary’s church in Ephesus. An alternative interpretation was offered by Oscar Broneer, who excavated a ‘Horse-riders’ flask on the north slope of the Acropolis in

Athens in the 1930s. Broneer said the figures “apparently represent the pilgrims rather than the saint whose shrine they visited.”¹⁹. Art historian Gary Vikan acknowledged that although the scene could be the Flight into Egypt, the Entry into Jerusalem or the Holy Rider, it may just as well have shown pilgrims themselves²⁰. The most recent interpretation was offered by Vera Zaleskaya, who argued the horse-riders were an early depiction of the Apocalypse²¹. Zaleskaya thought the figures were representations of God as described by St John, and they therefore proved a proto-Apocalyptic tradition originating from Ephesus.

The multitude of possible interpretations for this design shows the problem of determining the identity of figures, and therefore contextual information, from iconography alone. Whilst a biblical scene may be likely, the horse-riders could just as well be pilgrims, their attributes being some idiomatic symbol relating to pilgrimage. The presence of ships on a small number of Menas and Asia Minor flasks also suggests that modes of transport were being depicted, and that these designs relate to the amuletic properties of ampullae to assist pilgrims on their journey²².

The two ‘Horse-riders’ flasks in Leiden belong to Metzger’s second group, but iconographic differences, for instance the position of the horse’s head, prove the existence of a third sub-group (Pls 1-2). There are also differences in the quality of the designs, the amount of slip remaining, and the overall condition of the objects. This shows on one hand different states of preservation, but may also indicate the production of a second generation archetype which used a pre-existing ampulla to make a new mould. Clay lamps of this period were also

¹⁵ Reynolds 1997, 129-133. This repatriation illustrates how tenuous cultural ownership can be. The only difference between these few artifacts lost in the shipwreck and the many procured by Van Lennep which are still in Leiden is that the former were not accessioned by the museum at their time of acquisition.

¹⁶ Metzger 1981, nos 98-103.

¹⁷ Wulff 1909, I, 264.

¹⁸ Robert 1984.

¹⁹ Broneer 1932, 48.

²⁰ Vikan 1991.

²¹ Zaleskaya 1999.

²² A flask thought to come from Palestine whose design shows figures in a boat was excavated in the 1950s near the north Italian city of Aquileia, see Guarducci 1974. For images of travel shown on pilgrim flasks, see Vikan 1991.

mould-made, and they often went through several generations, causing the relief decoration to become retrograde. The manufacture of lamps in Asia Minor using moulds that originated from North Africa in the fifth century proves how designs could be swiftly disseminated between regions and could continue through several generations over long periods of time.

'EVANGELIST' AMPULLA

Leiden's other ampulla with figural decoration can be categorised as the 'Evangelist' type. It is extremely worn, with no remaining slip and very faint relief design, although the iconography can be assessed by comparison with better-preserved examples from museums and excavations²³. The profile view of a seated man writing in a book with a stylus appears on the first side. The man wears a full-length garment, has cropped hair and a short beard. To the man's left is a twisting column and behind him a bookcase. The figure on the reverse is facing straight ahead, and he wears a robe which seems to have a decorated hem and two double circles at the bottom, perhaps suggesting the vestment of a priest. Metzger interpreted the circles as *orbiculi*, decorated patches of cloth²⁴. The man has a short, pointed beard and he holds a codex in front of him with both hands. The book is decorated with a diagonal cross and dots. The figure is framed by two stylised palm leaves or trees.

'Evangelist' ampullae are one of the more frequently occurring designs and they have been the subject of much interpretation. In 1899, Michel Michon proposed that the seated saint was John the

Evangelist and the standing figure with the beard was St Paul²⁵. Michon acknowledged that the identification of St John was uncertain and based on the fact that many examples were said to have come from Ephesus. Despite this, the attribution has stuck; an ampulla bought by the World Heritage Collection at the University of Illinois is confidently identified as being "from the shrine of St John"²⁶.

The depiction of evangelists in the Rabbula gospels has been one iconographic basis of the identification, but literary descriptions of St John's shrine on the Ayasuluk hill outside Ephesus are more frequently cited²⁷. From the fifth century, the apocryphal Acts of St John mention miraculous dust issuing from the saint's tomb. Ephraim of Antioch, Augustine of Hippo, Gregory of Tours and the Anglo-Saxon bishop Willibald each refer to the production of miraculous dust or oil at John's shrine. The Catalan mercenary Muntaner recorded in his fourteenth-century *Chronicle* how the manna appeared annually, was collected by pilgrims and could be used to remedy afflictions ranging from difficult pregnancies to storms at sea²⁸. Vera Zaleskaya has interpreted the standing figure shown on this flask as St John and the seated figure as his scribe Prochorus²⁹. Maggie Duncan-Flowers thought it more likely that both images represented the evangelist, showing him as 'John the medium of divine revelation, and John the efficacious, miracle-working Apostle of Christ'³⁰.

Whilst historical and circumstantial evidence strongly suggest that the figure is St John and the flasks came from Ephesus, this attribution does not account for the diversity of figures – male and female – apostles, martyrs and warrior saints – that appear on other ampullae. At least twelve different designs showing figures can be discerned from known examples of Asia Minor ampullae, with sub-groups within some types³¹. A number of figures are carrying books; one has been identified as St Peter because of the keys which the man holds; another has a half-length portrait of a man holding a book in front of him and inscribed letters which identify the figure as St Andrew; yet another shows a man holding a book and flanked by two lions, presumably a martyr. A range of apostles and writers was therefore depicted on these flasks, and the *Hagios Andreas* inscriptions, incised after the ampulla had been fired, suggest that identity of figures might not have been determined at their point of production.

²³ The Louvre has three 'Evangelist' ampullae, see Metzger 1981, nos 113-115. There are also three in the British Museum, see Dalton 1901, nos 910-912. Two are held at Princeton, see Catalogue Princeton 1987, 147-148. Evangelist ampullae have been excavated at Aphrodisias (Campbell 1988, no. 3) and Sardis, see Hanfmann/Swift 1966.

²⁴ Metzger 1981, 45.

²⁵ Michon 1899, 318.

²⁶ Duncan-Flowers 1990.

²⁷ Griffing 1938.

²⁸ Literary sources are discussed by Maggie Duncan-Flowers, 1990, and more recently by Clive Foss (2002).

²⁹ Zaleskaya 1999.

³⁰ Duncan-Flowers 1990, 134.

³¹ See Metzger 1981.

NON-FIGURAL AMPULLAE

Whereas the three figural ampullae have fairly regular proportions and clay qualities, the five non-figural examples in Leiden show considerable variation in fabric, form and size, although their general shape is the same, allowing them to be classified as Asia Minor ampullae. The decorations on these flasks include circles, crosses and rosettes. These emblems also appear on figural ampullae, with concentric circles sometimes used as a framing device or within crosses and architectural features. The use of concentric circles has been interpreted as the adoption of Egyptian motifs, strengthening the possibility that the production of pilgrim flasks was transmitted to Asia Minor as a 'secondary consignment' of trade between Alexandria and Ephesus. Wherever the circular motif originated, its recurrence on a number of ampullae show how decoration as well as form can be used to group these objects as a distinct class of pottery.

Some of Leiden's non-figural ampullae can be matched with published examples, including one whose decoration is a cross with the four arms ending in forked points (Pl. 3)³². Within the cross are a number of circles and behind it, diagonal lines. This example has similar clay quality to the aforementioned 'Evangelist' ampulla, although its proportions are different and the handles are more pronounced rather than being simply holes bored into the body of the flask. It has a bulbous form and is not a regular oval shape like the figural types. Similar in size and form is an ampulla with a 16-petalled rosette, which has a pattern of concentric circles in the centre (Pl. 4)³³. The yellow coloured clay is markedly different however, and this suggests an alternative site of production. Another flask with a rosette design (no. 5) is very large compared with figural ampullae. Its form is also distinctive because the main body of the flask is rounded with two protruding handles added to the neck into which suspension holes have been bored. The flask is made of rough, red ware and has a lot of cement-like earth attached.

The two remaining ampullae, which both have 'Greek cross' designs, are far smaller than the regular figural type. They are different from each other in terms of fabric and form. One of these is the same as an example excavated at a gatehouse along the city walls of Sardis, found alongside a coin from the period of Justinian (Pl. 5)³⁴. The clay is light

yellowish brown with slightly darker slip, and its decoration is in high relief. The other ampulla is much thinner, made of rough, dark brown clay, and its decoration is in low relief (Pl. 6)³⁵. By comparing these two ampullae and noting the differences in fabric and moulds used to produce a very similar design, it seems likely that there were different phases and locations of production.

CATALOGUE

The following catalogue provides an inventory number, title, dimensions, and description of clay quality³⁶ for eight Asia Minor ampullae in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden.

1. S.288

Ampulla, *'Evangelist'*

6.5 × 4.6 × 2 cm

Light red colour, very worn, contains earth.

(2.5YR 5/6)

2. S.289

Ampulla, *Cross with forked points, circles and diagonal lines* (Pl. 3)

7.4 × 4.5 × 3.6 cm

Light red clay with traces of darker red slip, bulbous shape, pronounced handles.

Both sides have the same design.

(clay: 2.5YR 6/6, slip: 10R 5/6)

3. S.290

Ampulla, *Cross with circle in the centre* (Pl. 5)

4.3 × 3.6 × 2.5 cm

Light yellowish brown with slightly darker slip.

(10YR 6/4)

³² Metzger 1981, no. 139.

³³ Comparable with Metzger 1981, no. 150.

³⁴ Hanfmann/Waldbaum 1975, 45–47. Examples of this type were mentioned by Louis Robert (1984, 459), who bought ampullae from villagers in the region of Aphrodisias in the early 1980s.

³⁵ Examples in the Louvre are Metzger 1984, nos 132–135. For examples in Berlin, see Wulff 1909; nos 1355, 1356. There are also two in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, including one said to come from Ephesus, see Noll 1958, nos 26–27.

³⁶ Using the *Munsell soil color chart* (1994).



Pl. 1a/b. Ampulla (LKA 1022): Horse-riders



Pl. 2a/b. Ampulla (LKA 1051): Horse-riders



Pl. 3. Ampulla (S.289): Cross with forked points, circles and diagonal lines



Pl. 4. Ampulla (LKA 861): Rosette



Pl. 5. Ampulla (S.290): Cross with circle in the centre



Pl. 6. Ampulla (S.191): Cross in circular, serrated border

4. S.191

Ampulla, *Cross in circular, serrated border* (Pl. 6)
3.6 × 3.2 × 1.6 cm
Darkish-brown colour, very small proportions.
(7.5YR 5/3)

5. S.286

Ampulla, *Rosette*
8.8 × 6.5 × 4.2 cm
Large, dark red ampulla made of rough ware, lots of earth attached.
(2.5YR 4/6)

6. LKA 861

Ampulla, *Rosette* (Pl. 4)
6.7 × 5 × 3 cm
Yellow colour, large, well-preserved example.
(7.5YR 6/4)

7. LKA 1022

Ampulla, *'Horse-riders'* (Pls 1a, b)
6.7 × 5 × 2 cm
Light brown-yellow colour, worn surface.
(7.5YR 7/6)

8. LKA 1051

Ampulla, *'Horse-riders'* (Pls 2a, b)
6.6 × 5 × 2.3 cm
Light brown-yellow colour, well preserved. Some areas have traces of a dark red slip. This may not be original, but could alternatively be modern paint, applied to highlight the design.
(clay: 7.5YR 6/4. slip: 2.5YR 4/4)

CONCLUSION

The material culture of Late Antique pilgrimage has been addressed in various historical and theological studies whose approach often concentrates on iconography, using written sources to identify saints and interpret religious imagery. Apart from research into Menas and Monza flasks, archaeological assessment of pilgrim ampullae – including

fabric analysis, establishment of typology and research into their occurrence at excavations – has not been undertaken. As Ken Dark recently noted, synthesis of Byzantine pottery is lacking, despite growth in archaeological fieldwork concentrating on Late Antique and Byzantine sites³⁷.

What can be concluded from looking at the eight Leiden ampullae is the variation in moulds and fabrics within this pottery form. Differences between the two 'Horse-riders' designs can be compared with examples from the Louvre to show that at least three moulds were used to produce one iconographic type; their different states of preservation may additionally point to the use of several generations of mould. The most obvious variation within this group of ampullae is the clay quality, with the colour ranging from dark red to light yellow as well as different consistency and inclusions. Although clay may have been obtained from different sources by potters working in the same place, the variety suggests that ampullae were in fact made at a number of different sites. Their occurrence at excavations in western Asia Minor seems to show that these production sites were confined to a relatively small region, suggesting that a distinct landscape of pilgrimage sites existed here in the second half of the sixth century.

Identifying how many and which pilgrim centres in Asia Minor produced flasks is important to our understanding of religious practices at a time when spiritual identity and sectarian affiliation was seemingly enigmatic³⁸. Studies that reconstruct the 'sacred topography' of early Christian pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem have relied mostly on architectural remains, historical accounts and contemporaneous imagery such as maps³⁹. Asia Minor ampullae point to the existence of a significant network of saint cults operating in western Anatolia during the late-sixth century, and may also prove how these sites were orchestrated by ecclesiastical entities who somehow licensed or controlled the distribution of 'contact relics'. Only further study of contextual and typological aspects of pilgrim flasks can allow for the material culture of pilgrimage to be used as evidence of specific social and political phenomena.

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³⁷ Dark 2001, 7-12.

³⁸ Jaś Elsner recently questioned the customary demarcations made between Jewish and Christian art, see Elsner 2003. Thanks to Miguel John Versluys for drawing my attention to this article.

³⁹ Wilkinson 1976; Hunt 1994. Thanks to John Bintliff for pointing me to the second article.

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*Brother George the Scribe: An Early Christian Panel Painting from Egypt in Context**

Susan H. AUTH

Very few panel paintings on wood with Christian subjects have survived from late antique Egypt (see Appendix). One of these paintings, a bust portrait of a monk, is now one of the treasures in the Coptic collection of The Newark Museum, Newark (New Jersey; Appendix, no. 1; Pl. 1)¹. The portrait is painted in tempera technique on a roughly sawn piece of wood, probably sycamore. In its present state, the panel is 29 cm high, 40.3 cm wide and 1 cm thick². The panel is split horizontally through the center, and the left and right sides have jagged edges. Neither the top nor the bottom of the board have kept their original contour.

The thinly applied white ground has almost disappeared in the two vertical bands, ca. 4.5 cm wide,

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¹ The Appendix below lists those paintings known to me. Inv. no. 83.42. Purchase, Charles Dikran Kelekian, 1983. Sotheby Parke-Bernet Auction no. 4497Y, December 11, 1980, lot 312. Provenance: California Private Collection.

² The width of the painted portion is now 24.5 cm, while the estimated original width is 29 cm.



Pl. 1. *Brother George the Scribe*. Collection of The Newark Museum



Pl. 2. Close-up of Brother George the scribe (S. Auth)

that frame the picture space. The background is a deep pink. A yellow halo surrounds the head, indicating that the subject is among the revered deceased. The white face of the monk stands out against the black of the closely cropped hair, mustache and short beard. Greying hair is suggested by thin white lines and curlicues in the beard. Another sign of incipient aging is a pale wash of beige curving up in a half

circle on the forehead. The pupils of the eyes are black, within an orange-yellow zone outlined in brown. Below the eyebrows there is a thin red line, followed by a line of grey shading³. This shading continues down along the right side of the nose. The corresponding grey shading below the eyes is rimmed by a half-circle of white (Pl. 2). Red lines outline the base of the nose and the mouth, which is directly beneath the mustache. The faint outlines of the mouth have almost disappeared, giving the erroneous impression that the black tuft of beard in the center of the chin is in fact the mouth.

A thick black line one centimetre wide outlines the halo, while thinner brown lines delineate the edges of the head and shoulders. The pale grey of the monk's robe is accented with brown and white fold lines. A mantle is draped over his left shoulder. Above the halo on the monk's right side is the Coptic word $\Psi\alpha\zeta$, meaning 'scribe'⁴. Lower down on the same side can be seen the letters $[r]\epsilon\omega\pi\rho\epsilon$. Thus our monk can be identified as 'Brother George the Scribe'. The thick black vertical lines on the left shoulder can be understood as four reed pens protruding from a pen case slung over the left shoulder. The vertical yellow accents suggest the color of the reeds. A carved wooden box lid found at Bawit depicts a scribal monk with just such a pen case⁵. Another example can be seen in the Louvre: a stamped leather pen case decorated with St Philotheos, found in Antinoë (Middle Egypt)⁶. The floral motif at the left edge of the panel indicates that the image of Brother George is part of a longer painted frieze. A small section of wood continuing beyond the right-hand vertical band indicates a continuation of the frieze on the right side as well.

As I will discuss below, there is very good evidence that the portrait of Brother George comes from the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit (Middle Egypt). Thus it is more understandable that there are some striking similarities between the image of Brother George and that of the Abbot Mena in the icon of Christ and the Abbot Mena, found at this monastery in 1901-2 and now in the Louvre (no. 2)⁷. Particularly striking is the similarity between the shading of the eyes on Brother George and on the two faces of the icon (Pl. 3). All three faces have a red line and grey shading above the eyes, and grey shading with a white outline below⁸.

³ Due to losses of the paint surface, and mending just below the eyes, the shading on the eyes can be seen more clearly under low-power magnification. I would like to thank conservator Linda Niewenhuisen for her help in interpreting this evidence.

⁴ Cerný 1976, 178. I would like to thank Marie-Hélène Rutschowskaya for the identification of the portrait as a scribe.

⁵ Cairo, Coptic Museum, inv. no. 8796; Catalogue Paris/Cap d'Agde 2000, 110-111 (M.-H. Rutschowskaya).

⁶ Inv. no. AF 5158, Byzantine period; Catalogue Paris/Cap d'Agde 2000, 64 (M.-H. Rutschowskaya).

⁷ Thorough treatment of this icon and its background in Rutschowskaya 1998.

⁸ The apparent red in the bottom outline of Abbot Mena's eye must be the line of the preliminary drawing showing through.



Pl. 3. Close-up of Abbot Mena from the icon of Christ and Abbot Mena. Louvre, inv. no. E 11565 (Christiane Larrieu)

Christ and Brother George⁹ have grey shadow lines on the right side of the nose and the right edge of the face, while Abbot Mena has the same grey shadow on the right edge of the face and the left side of the nose (Pl. 3).

A CONNECTION BETWEEN BROTHER GEORGE AND BAWIT?

Two bust portraits on wood very close in style to The Newark Museum's Brother George are part of the collection of the Musée des Jacobins in Auch (Southern France; nos 3, 4; Pls 4, 5). These two portraits were found during the excavations of the Monastery of Bawit, and were brought to the museum in 1902 by Charles Palanque, one of the excavators. Unfortunately there is no record of where at Bawit the Auch portraits were found. Only one portrait of a monk on wood has been found in situ at Bawit. It was discovered at the base of the destroyed wall in Room 5 during Maspero's 1913 excavation (no. 5). The panel is rectangular, with reserved bands on all four sides, and preserves only

the outline of the halo, the shoulders and the right arm and hand, with an inscription above for 'Master Hor, the Chanter', [Ψ]αζ ζωρ πεψαλμωτος.

One of the Auch portraits, identified by an inscription above the head as 'Brother Mark', ΠΑCΟΝ ΜΑΡΚ[ΟC], has the same pink ground, yellow halo, and definite black and brown outlines as Brother George (Pl. 4). Brother Mark wears a white tunic with brown fold lines. Not only the colors, but also the details of the outlining (for example the shape of the ears, the curved hairline over the forehead, and the use of faint red lines above the eyes) are strikingly similar to those in the portrait of Brother George. Moreover, Brother Mark has the same grey shading on the right side of the nose and below the eyes as Brother George. So close are the colors, shading and distinctive outlining in the two portraits that the same artist is likely to have painted both of them.

The third monk is painted on a background which was originally green, but has now almost disappeared (Pl. 5)¹⁰. The same background color is used in the icon of Christ and Abbot Mena¹¹. In both paintings the green has survived less well than the other colors. The monk's name, which is no longer visible, must have been painted on this now-vanished layer of paint. His tunic and mantle are grey-blue, with brown and white fold lines. His bald head and expression of quiet resignation reveal that he is an older man than the other two monks.

Although all three images are highly stylized, they represent clearly different and recognizable people. Brother Mark has a long, narrow face and an upturned gaze, while Brother George has a squarer face and looks directly ahead. The rounder face, distinctive expression and discreet signs of age on the now-anonymous monk indicate a different individual as well. All three panels seem to be portraits of distinct individuals. Portions of the top and bottom reserved bands survive on the two portraits at Auch. However, not enough remains of the side panels of either portrait to judge whether

⁹ Only visible under low power magnification; see note 3 *supra*.

¹⁰ Coupry, 2003, 103. Although none could be identified on this painting, other Coptic paintings of this period use malachite.

¹¹ Rutschowskaya 1998, 6.



Pl. 4. *Brother Mark*. Musée des Jacobins, Auch, inv. no. 985.228 (courtesy of Fabien Ferrer-Joly)

they were individual portraits or part of a longer frieze with busts of monks. It would be tempting to think that Brother Mark, and the anonymous monk as well, belonged to the same frieze composition as Brother George. Although Brother Mark's portrait is narrower than Brother George's by about four centimeters, the height is about the same. The close relationship of the two Auch portraits to that

of Brother George makes it likely that his portrait came from the Monastery of Bawit as well.

COMMEMORATIVE PAINTINGS ON WOODEN PANELS

It might be useful to give a brief survey of earlier portraits on wood from Egypt. From the mid-first to the mid-third century of our era¹², bust portraits of the deceased were painted on wooden panels and inserted into the wrappings of the mummy¹³. These images were made for the Graeco-Roman and Egyptian urban elite¹⁴. Although they are generally known as 'Fayum portraits', similar images were produced in other regions of Egypt as well¹⁵. The painters used both encaustic and tempera techniques¹⁶. From a total of one thousand portraits, about one hundred of the complete ensembles of portrait and mummy have survived¹⁷. The mummy coverings and vignettes give an indication for dating, and show the continuation of ancient Egyptian

¹² Walker 2000, 34-36, a lucid discussion of different chronological theories. For economic factors, see Duncan-Jones 2003, 41-42.

¹³ Detailed treatments in Walker/Bierbrier 1997, Walker 2000 and Doxiades 1995.

¹⁴ Bagnall in Walker/Bierbrier 1997, 17-20; Walker 2003, 320. For funeral expenses, see Montserrat 1997, 40-44.

¹⁵ Walker/Bierbrier 1997, 105, map, 8. For more details, see Doxiades 1995, 122-158.

¹⁶ Doxiades 1995, 95-101.

¹⁷ Corcoran 1995, 3.



Pl. 5. *Anonymous monk. Musée des Jacobins, Auch, inv. no. 985.229 (courtesy of Fabien Ferrer-Joly)*

funerary images and beliefs¹⁸. A good example is the young man Artemidoros, whose portrait in Graeco-Roman style contrasts with his red stucco mummy case with its traditional gilded Egyptian funerary motifs¹⁹. The combination of Graeco-Roman portraits and Egyptian mummies reflects the subjects' self identification as Greek, along with their acceptance of Egyptian funerary traditions²⁰.

Most of the Fayum portraits have been separated from their original context and function now as images in their own right. The deceased are portrayed as individuals, painted in three-quarter view with their faces subtly shaded. Other portraits are frontal. The women's hairstyle and jewelry reflect the latest fashions that change with time²¹. In most cases there is a striking emphasis on the size and expression of the eyes²².

The tempera portrait of a middle-aged man from the cemetery of Philadelphia in the Fayum provides a good comparison to that of Brother

George (Pl. 6)²³. The painter has delineated the wrinkles and contours of the face by cross-hatching and by adding lines of diluted color. The hair, mustache and beard are indicated in individual brush strokes of black and white. This contrasts with the flatter style of Brother George, which shows only slight modeling around the eyes and

¹⁸ Corcoran 1995, 49-61.

¹⁹ London, British Museum, inv. no. EA 21810, Trajanic, ca 98-117; Walker/Bierbrier 1997, 56; Doxiades 1995, 70, 202-203.

²⁰ Bagnall 1997, 19-20; Walker 2003, 319. Corcoran 1995, 76-78, emphasizes their Egyptian ethnicity, and the continuation of ancient Egyptian funerary practices. Riggs 2002 gives a balanced picture and extensive recent bibliography on burial practices in Roman Egypt.

²¹ See various entries in Walker 2000.

²² Doxiades 1995, 91-92.

²³ London, Freud Museum, inv. no. 4946; about A.D. 220-240 (Walker 2000, 87).



Pl. 6. *Fayum portrait of middle-aged man;*
A.D. 220-240; Freud Museum, London

nose. The most striking difference is in the eyes. Although they are emphasized in both portraits, the gaze of the man from Philadelphia confronts the viewer, while that of Brother George looks beyond to eternity.

²⁴ London, British Museum, inv. no. GRA 1889.10-18.1 (Walker/Bierbrier 1997, 121-122). Some of the portraits cut down to fit the mummy wrappings might originally have had frames.

²⁵ Gschwantler 2000, 20, Fig. 7: a sketch of a painter's studio, ca A.D. 100, showing a similar framed portrait.

²⁶ Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology. Long-term loan from Swarthmore College, Dennison Collection 275 (Walker 2000, 121-123, Pl. 78).

²⁷ Walker 1999, 77-78.

²⁸ Walker 1999, 78 note 15.

²⁹ Paris, Louvre, inv. no. AF 6440. Walker in Walker/Bierbrier 1997, 160, dates this shroud to ca 300, M.F. Aubert in Walker 2000, 147 to "fourth century A.D".

³⁰ Walker 2003, 325.

³¹ Walker 1999, 78 note 15, amends the date proposed in Walker/Bierbrier 1997, 160, no. 181.

Almost all Fayum portraits were fitted within the mummy wrappings. There are only two examples of free-standing images. One is a small panel portrait of a woman with a wooden frame and a rope to hang it on the wall²⁴. Since it was found propped up against the mummy case, it must have been removed from its place in the home and placed in the grave²⁵. The other freestanding funerary portrait, which lacks suspension holes, depicts the eleven-year old girl Tekosis, dating to A.D. 180-200²⁶. With her curled hairstyle and elaborate jewelry the child looks older than her age. She is surrounded by images of mirrors and perfume flasks, accoutrements of the married woman she was never to be.

After the practice of painting mummy portraits ceased, finds from Antinoopolis (Antinoë) show that the practice of painting funerary shrouds continued in the later third century and into the fourth²⁷. One shroud, made perhaps ca A.D. 300²⁸, depicts a patrician woman wearing a purple dalmatic with wide decorated clavi and holding an ankh²⁹. The *ankh* in this portrait could be seen as an early symbol of Christianity, or as a continuation of the ancient Egyptian symbol of life³⁰. A second shroud of a woman may have been made in the second half of the fourth century if compared to the costume and style of later images in mosaics and gold-glass³¹. The enormous shadowed eyes seem to prefigure later Coptic paintings and icons, such as a fragmentary icon of Christ now in the Benaki Museum in Athens (no. 6).

After the portraits and painted shrouds ceased to be made, evidence becomes very sparse. Surely skilled painters continued to practice their craft in Egypt. We can only guess at the painted decorations of wealthy houses, lavish public buildings and early churches that are now lost. The surviving evidence for painting on wood consists of a few scattered finds made for different purposes. Here, I deal only with examples that have Christian subjects.

From a burial chamber in a funerary complex at Antinoë come seven wooden plaques, of which five survive, now divided between the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and the Museo Egizio in Florence. Two of them are images of military saints: St Theodore (?; no. 7) and St Victor Stratelates (no. 8). The other plaques depict an archangel (no. 9), a veiled woman (no. 10), and a bearded saint or monk (no. 11). These five plaques differ in style, ranging from the more classicizing three-quarter view head of the

archangel to the heavily outlined frontal face of St Victor Stratelates. Since they were all found together, they seem to reflect both older modes and the emergence of a distinct religious painting style in Egypt at the time. This style may have emerged among different painters who worked at the many religious communities attested for the Antinoopolis region at this time³².

The plaque showing the bearded saint is of most interest here (no. 11). It is a starkly outlined bust of an old white-bearded man, dressed in a plain tunic with a mantle over both shoulders. In better photographs the faint outline of a halo can be seen around his head³³. He holds a funerary garland in his right hand³⁴. Here we have an idealized funerary portrait of a saint or the founder of a monastery, made on a small scale for personal veneration³⁵. This image appears to be built up in heavy layers of paint, with thick outlines and no shading. The bust of St Victor Stratelates (no. 8) shares the same impasto paint surface, although the outlining is more fluid and graceful.

Roughly contemporary with the Antinoë panels are two long and narrow painted panels from the Fayum, which have been dated to the sixth century. Both are now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (nos 13, 14). One represents St Mark the Evangelist, holding his gospel. The other is the haloed bust of an archangel, dressed in a mantle fastened on the right shoulder over a tunic with purple and white shoulder decoration. A thick black line outlines the large yellow halo that overlaps one edge of the picture frame. The paint is more carefully layered, the decorative elements are more elaborate, and the outlines are more neatly drawn than on the Antinoë panels. The skin is rendered in white paint. These icons are generic in their features, but differentiated by their hairstyles, garments and attributes.

Holy Father Abraham, bishop of Hermonthis, is a well-known figure who was also the abbot of the Monastery of Phoibammon at Deir al-Bahri. His tempera portrait on wood is thought to have been made during his life, at the start of his tenure as bishop in A.D. 590-600 (no. 15). Such portraits were commissioned for display in churches of a bishop's diocese³⁶. The bishop wears a halo, reflecting the great reverence accorded to early bishops even during their lifetimes³⁷. This would distinguish Father Abraham from other holy figures, who were haloed only after their demise.

This image is a much more refined painting than the small Antinoë plaques, with careful rendering of the bishop's austere visage and his attributes. The skin on Bishop Abraham's portrait is rendered in yellow and orange tones, in contrast to the white and grey used on the icon of Christ and the Abbot Menas. The portrait has a harder contour and less subtle shading than the Bawit panels³⁸. The differences in color and style may reflect the local painting style in the Theban region where Bishop Abraham served³⁹.

With the portraits of Bishop Abraham, St Mark and the archangel we are in the realm of Coptic Christianity and monasticism. However, the few surviving paintings do not allow for a real history of panel painting from the funerary images of the mid-fourth century to the emergence of these works.

BUST PORTRAITS ON THE WALL PAINTINGS OF BAWIT

Since the three wooden bust portraits of the three monks from Bawit cannot be placed with certainty in the monastic complex, it may be helpful to see how the bust portrait motif is treated on the wall paintings of the monastery. Inscriptions beside each image indicate that the artists intended to represent specific individuals, although they are quite generic in most cases.

The surviving paintings from the monastery buildings at Bawit are a small proportion of the original decoration. Nevertheless, friezes with rows of painted busts in roundels have survived on the walls of four rooms. The busts are enclosed in separate or interlaced roundels. A few busts are painted within squares. Clédat believed that these rooms were funerary chapels⁴⁰. Maspero, however, in the publication of his 1913 excavation, more accurately identified them as chapels connected to the monks' workrooms and living spaces, a view which has been

³² Coquin/Martin 1991, 144-145.

³³ Parlasca 1966, Pl. 53,4.

³⁴ Parlasca 1966, 211, makes a convincing case for a garland here, rather than a scroll.

³⁵ Rassart-Debergh 1990, 59.

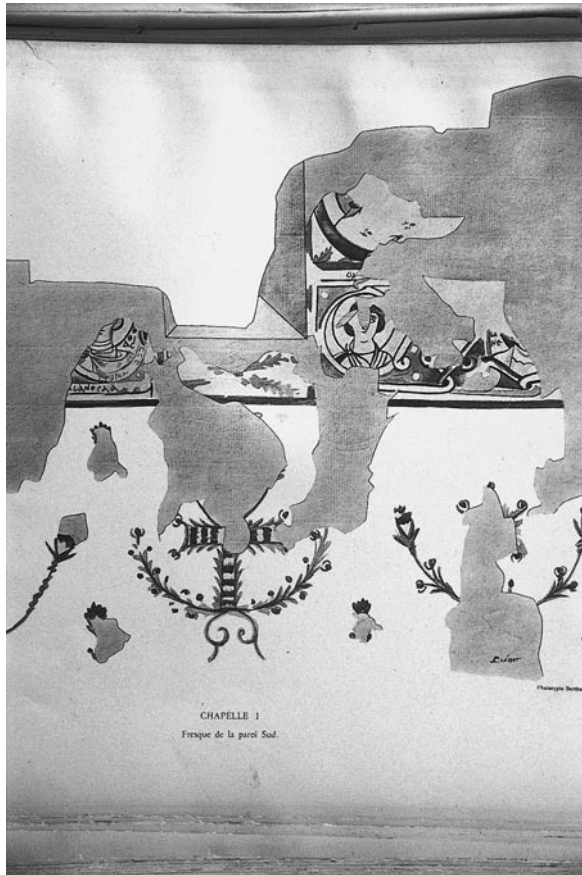
³⁶ Krause 1971, 109 note 29.

³⁷ Kollwitz 1954, 331.

³⁸ For facing color plates of both icons, see Zibawi 2003, 102-103.

³⁹ Krause 1971, 110.

⁴⁰ Clédat 1910, col. 226.



Pl. 7. Bawit, Chapel 1, south wall (Clédât 1904, Pl. X)

confirmed recently by Grossmann⁴¹. The paintings are done in tempera technique on a thin ground. Their fragility caused them to flake and fall from the walls when they were exposed to light and air⁴².

On the south wall of Chapel I were traces of two superimposed friezes with busts of saints, allegorical figures and perhaps fathers of the Coptic Church (Pl. 7)⁴³. The busts are enclosed in roundels of twisted interlacing. The saints are portrayed as youthful and beardless, with mantles fastened on the right shoulder with a fibula. In some cases the rectangular shoulder decoration of a Persian-style tunic can be seen beneath the mantle. This is the costume depicted on the full length paintings of the rider saints Phoibamon and Sissinios at Bawit (Chapel XVII)⁴⁴.

On the east wall of Chapel XII there is a frieze which preserves three busts of Coptic saints above another frieze with busts of the Virtues (Pl. 8)⁴⁵. Two of the saints' names can be read as 'Phoibamon' and 'Philotheos'. These haloed saints are depicted as young and beardless and their costume is the same as the one in Chapel I. Starburst patterns separate each bust. The Virtues below can be identified as Faith, Hope, Charity and Patience. The bust of Hope is female. Unusually, that of Patience looks like a young and beardless man⁴⁶.

The friezes in Chapel XII show how the bust portraits were used in the overall scheme of wall decoration. The busts separate the lower dado from the large-scale religious scenes at the top of the wall. In the east wall apse an image of the enthroned Christ is painted. The remaining upper space on all four walls of the chapel is taken up with pairs of prophets. Each pair stands in a rectangle surrounded by a wide rinceau frame⁴⁷. Below are the two friezes, separated by a lavish row of rinceau decoration. The central scene of Christ flanked by archangels and prophets is taller than the others; in consequence, that section of the wall lacks the frieze of saints. Below the frieze of Virtues there is a dado of rectangles with fleur de lys designs, separated by decorated pilasters⁴⁸. The colors, as they appear in Clédât's watercolors, are very bright: yellow and red with black outlines and green accents.

On the north wall of Chapel XVIII busts of two haloed monks in roundels flank a bust of St George (Pl. 9)⁴⁹. The better-preserved bust on the left is labeled 'Father Amone, the father of our illustrious

⁴¹ Maspero 1931, xii. Remains of hearths, eating and food-storage utensils reinforce this interpretation; see also Grossmann 2002, 279-281, Fig. 143 (revised plan).

⁴² Rutschowskaya 1998, 6.

⁴³ Clédât 1904, Pl. X. 'Fathers of the Church' are shown bearded and wearing simple tunics and mantles. Not enough remains of the far right-hand bust in Clédât's drawing to determine if the portrayed is indeed a monk.

⁴⁴ Clédât 1904, Pls LIV, LVI. Persian-style tunics differ from the Egyptian ones in having one vertical decorative band in the center of the tunic rather than two bands, one on each side. The shoulder decorations are rectangles, rather than squares or roundels. The complete costume also includes leggings and a long cloak. On the Persian costume at Bawit, see Lucchesi-Palli 1995.

⁴⁵ Clédât 1904, 63, Pl. XXXI. Only the right side of the plate is illustrated here.

⁴⁶ The Virtues on the frieze of cell 709 at the Monastery of Apa Jeremiah at Saqqara are female, with long hair and elaborate earrings (Rassart-Debergh 1981, 197, Pls I-II). Oddly, Van Moorsel 1981, 92-94 in the same volume describes them as male.

⁴⁷ Clédât 1904, Pl. XXXV.

⁴⁸ Clédât 1999, Fig. 7.

⁴⁹ Clédât 1904, 89-91, Pls LXII-LXIII.



Pl. 8. Bawit, Chapel XII, east wall (Clédat 1904, Pl. XXXI)

father'. Father Amone seems to be bearded, and wears a tunic and a mantle draped over both shoulders. The portrait of the monk on the right has almost disappeared, leaving only the inscription that identifies him as 'Father Amoi, the man from Tanis'⁵⁰. Both monks are haloed. On this wall, 4.65 m in length, long bands of brightly colored geometric decoration resembling carved woodwork separate the portrait roundels. The images of the monks are juxtaposed to the image of St George, and are not given a lesser position either by their size or placement in the decoration.

The longer west wall of the same chapel, 12.6 m in length, is much damaged. Five busts of Virtues

survive, along with a haloed monk holding a pen against an open book⁵¹ and haloed images of the biblical figures Joseph and 'Zachariah the priest', who is identified by name (Pl. 10)⁵².

⁵⁰ Clédat 1904, 91, notes that 'Tanis' in this case refers to a village near Bawit.

⁵¹ Clédat 1904, 93, no. 14, Pl. LXIX, top. This is one of only three images of scribes in the existing paintings at Bawit. The others are the damaged figure in the niche of Chapel XVII (Pl. L), and the full-length figure in Chapel XLII (Clédat 1999, Figs 56-57).

⁵² Clédat 1904, 92-94, Pls LXVI-LXXXIII, Fig. 49. A diagram lists the surviving images without illustrating all of them.



Pl. 9. Bawit, Chapel XVIII, north wall (Clédat 1904, Pl. LXIII)



Pl. 10. Bawit, Chapel XVIII, west wall (Clédat 1904, Pl. LXXIII)



Pl. 11. Monk on vertical pylon. Room 5, east wall niche
(Maspero 1943. Pl. XII)

The paintings in this chapel are remarkable for the inventiveness of their decorative detail. On the north wall the three bust portraits are divided by long stretches of geometric decoration. The south wall combines bands of a different variety of geometric and floral decoration broken up by single figures and animals in octagons. On the more densely painted west wall colorful interlaced bands link the circular frames for the busts and the diamond-shaped frames for birds. Flower-basket motifs fill the interstices. Contemporary clothing, household textiles and woodcarving use these same motifs. Christian scenes and busts of holy personages transform the bright patterns of the secular world into a small prayer-filled universe for the ascetic monks within.

From Room 5 in Maspero's 1913 excavation – the room in which the panel with 'Master Hor the Chanter' was found – comes the bust of a monk painted on a vertical pilaster (Pl. 11)⁵³. The pilaster is one of a pair flanking a niche. The portrait is near the floor level, above a rectangle of diamond pattern. The bust itself is set in a roundel within a rectangle. The monk has a yellow halo and a white robe, and is painted against a green background. Only the word 'apa' remains of the inscription⁵⁴. There may have been a number of alternating busts of monks and ornamental panels on the upper parts of this pylon. Here the usual horizontal frieze of busts alternating with decorative squares has been transferred to a vertical format.

Chapel LIV, excavated by Clédât, was published in 1999 as part of the notes and photographs bequeathed to the Louvre from his estate⁵⁵. Unlike the decoration in the other rooms, the bust frieze in this chapel is set at the top of the walls, and



Pl. 12. Bawit, Chapel LIV, west wall
(courtesy of Clédât archive, Musée du Louvre)

forms the only painted decoration⁵⁶. The holy fathers Apollo and Phib, the founders of the monastery at Bawit⁵⁷, are pictured, as is the 'Holy Martyr Eudaimon'⁵⁸. The busts of 'Phillip' and 'Jacob' wear the short hair of monks and the monks' simple costume of tunic and mantle. 'John', whose hair is longer, may be the Evangelist. Each of these figures holds a book⁵⁹. The martyr Eudaimon wears the mantle and decorated tunic of other saints. Some of the busts are placed in interlaced roundels set within square frames. Others are part of friezes that alternate roundels and diamonds (Pl. 12).

A particularly interesting bust frieze as a comparison to the image of Brother George can be seen on the west wall of Chapel XXXVII (Pl. 13)⁶⁰. On the upper portion there is part of a hunt scene with men in Persian costume. Below is a frieze of busts in roundels: youthful images of the 'saint' type, wearing mantles over ornamented tunics. A quickly sketched image of a monk reading from a book finishes the row on the right. Although there are no inscriptions to identify these busts, they were probably intended to be generic images of saints. The yellow roundels on which they are painted suggest haloes.

⁵³ Maspero 1931, 18; 1943, 70, Pl. XII.

⁵⁴ Maspero 1931, 61, inscription 54.

⁵⁵ Clédât 1999, 5.

⁵⁶ Clédât 1999, 141.

⁵⁷ Clédât 1999, 142, Photo 128. The inscriptions read by Clédât are no longer visible.

⁵⁸ Clédât 1999, Photo 130; O'Leary 1937, 210-211.

⁵⁹ Clédât 1999, 142, Photo 121-123, 125-127.

⁶⁰ Clédât 1916, 39, Pl. XVII.



Pl. 13 Bawit, Chapel XXXVII, north wall, right side (Clédât 1916, Pl. XVII)

The busts are separated by squares, each with four scalloped leaves radiating out diagonally from a central yellow boss. Lotus buds separate the leaves. The shape of the leaves and their alternating colors are precisely the same as the leaf on the left of the panel of Brother George (see Pl. 1)⁶¹. On the painting of Brother George there is a corner outlined in dark brown just beyond the reserved vertical band on the left side of the panel. The lower half of a leaf is set diagonally to the corner⁶². On a black oval the scalloped edges of the leaf are outlined in white. The bottom half of the leaf is yellow; the top half was originally deep pinkish-red. The mid-rib is indicated by a black line over-painted with a row of white dots. This leaf does seem to be the beginning of a four-leaf square, just like the ones on the wall

paintings of Chapel XXXVII. If Brother George's portrait follows the pattern of the wall paintings, this decorative square would have served as a separator between Brother George and another portrait bust.

The similarity between this leaf and the identical four-leaf decorative squares on the wall painting is striking. Even if the painters of the walls and of the wooden panels were not the same artists, they certainly saw and copied each others' work. I will discuss below how this humble leaf provides a clue to the original placement of Brother George's portrait within the Bawit monastery complex.

SUMMARY OF BUST PORTRAITS IN THE CHAPELS

In the chapels at Bawit the bust portrait friezes include New Testament figures such as Joseph and John, along with specifically Egyptian saints such as Phoibamon, Philotheos and Eudaimon⁶³. We see Apollo and Phib, the founding fathers of the monastery at Bawit, as well as lesser-known figures of local repute, such as Father Amone and Father

⁶¹ For the provenance of this motif, see Lucchesi-Palli 1990, 127.

⁶² The present half-leaf is 7.5 cm long. The original length would have been about 13 cm, the same as that on the Louvre panel, see note 84 below.

⁶³ O'Leary 1937, 133, 229-231.

Amoi. Numerous scribbled prayers written on the walls show that the local monks were venerated as saints and as intercessors for the living⁶⁴. The deceased monks portrayed in these paintings also served as models whose holy example the living monks strived to emulate in their prayers and ascetic practices⁶⁵. Bolman has argued that the paintings in these spaces devoted to prayer were aids in the transformation of the monk to a higher level of spirituality⁶⁶. The figures painted on the walls are those who have attained this state.

The bust images of the local monks are generic in style. Their identifying names and style of hair and costume indicate their monastic status. All figures, including the lesser-known clerics, wear haloes, a sign of sanctity⁶⁷. This accords with the portrayals of monks shown full-length on the Bawit wall paintings⁶⁸. Deceased Bawit monks are nimbed like the saints, an indication that they have attained sanctity after death⁶⁹, and have passed from this world into the light close to God⁷⁰. Bishop Abraham, if his portrait as a living person was haloed, is a special case of a bishop and abbot revered almost as a saint during his lifetime⁷¹. Apa Apollo, the founder of the Bawit monastery, was accorded the same status⁷².

The haloed monks, virtues, and saints occupy a central position on the wall, appearing on friezes at eye level, between the bottom dado and the larger and more important religious scenes on the upper parts of the walls. Their position shows them to be intermediaries between the earthly and spiritual realms.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUST PAINTINGS ON WALLS AND FUNERARY PORTRAITS OF THE THREE MONKS

Unlike the bust paintings on the walls of the Bawit chapels, the wooden panels of Brother George, Brother Mark and the anonymous monk were certainly painted as funerary portraits. As such, following the millennia-old traditions of Egypt, their images are recognizable likenesses, identified by name. This distinguishes them from the more generic images of the saints on the chapel paintings. The local saints' images on the wall paintings would have been made long after their deaths when their individual features were no longer known. They served as types of monastic holiness, rather than as individuals. If the three portraits of the monks were painted at the time of death, what place did they have in the monastery and its decoration?

In the South Church of Bawit wooden friezes and individual panels were either set into the walls or attached to them⁷³. There are no attachment holes visible in the monks' portraits⁷⁴. However, the reserved vertical and horizontal strips at the sides of the paintings could have been covered by thin pieces of wood for attaching the paintings to the wall. This method seems to have been used for earlier painted wooden friezes⁷⁵. We do not know if the monks' portraits were displayed at eye level, like the bust portraits painted onto the plaster on the walls.

There is some tantalizing evidence to suggest a location for the monks' portraits. In the Coptic section at the Louvre the bottom half of a fragmentary painted panel with two leaves of the same type as that seen on Brother George's portrait is preserved (Pl. 14; for the design scheme of the complete panel see Pl. 13). From the corners, the leaves radiate into a central yellow circle. The shape of the leaves and their two-color scheme (red and yellow, red and green), is the same as the leaf on Brother George's panel. Between the leaves a lotus flower has been painted.

The Louvre panel was catalogued as of "provenance inconnue"⁷⁶. As will be discussed, we now know that this type of decorative panel was found at Bawit. The width of the Louvre panel is 30.3 cm, about the same width as the painted portion of Brother George's portrait. The height also corresponds to the height of the Newark portrait. This decorative panel could therefore belong to the same frieze as the portrait of Brother George. It also provides a clear idea of the design that separated Brother George's image from the other portraits on

⁶⁴ Grabar 1946, 297-298.

⁶⁵ Wessel 1965, 174.

⁶⁶ Bolman 1998, 66; 71-72.

⁶⁷ Brenk 1991, 720.

⁶⁸ Clédat 1904, Pls CIX.

⁶⁹ Bolman 1998, 76.

⁷⁰ Collinet-Guérin 1961, 285.

⁷¹ Kollwitz, note 39 *supra*.

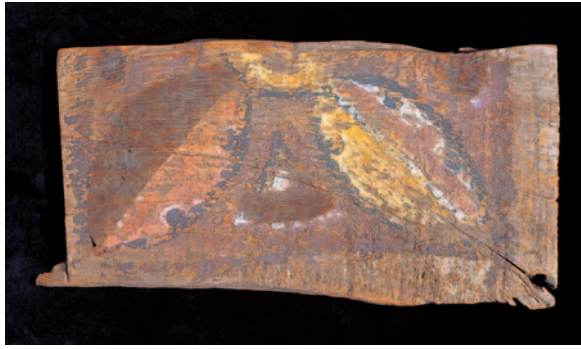
⁷² Bolman 1998, 69.

⁷³ Chassinat 1911, Pls XVI, XXXV.

⁷⁴ However, see footnote 84 *infra*.

⁷⁵ Wessel 1965, 171, Pl. XIII suggests that a frieze with male and female busts with reserved vertical strips was set into a framework.

⁷⁶ Inv. no. AF 4766 (Rutschowskaya 1992, 52, no. 23). There is evidence of a nail-hole in the bottom right-hand corner of the panel.



Pl. 14. *Partial leaf panel from Bawit; Louvre, inv. no. AF 4766 (G. Poncet)*

the wooden frieze. The dimensions of the portrait of Brother Mark, now at Auch, indicate that his portrait may have formed part of the same painted frieze.

A fragmentary panel with precisely the same type of floral decoration has come to light during recent excavations undertaken in the North Church at Bawit in 2003 (Pl. 14)⁷⁷. This panel, now in the Louvre, seems to have been found in the same area during the earlier excavation. Since the recently excavated floral panel is slightly larger than the panel in the Louvre⁷⁸, it could not have formed part of the frieze with the portraits of monks. However, there is no way to tell if the objects found in the North Church in 2003 came from the North or



Pl. 15. *Partial leaf panel from North Church excavations (G. Poncet)*

South Churches or the passageway between them. This whole sector was excavated in 1902, but never properly described or published⁷⁹. The fill of the north church consists of earth thrown back in by the original excavators, as well as areas not previously searched⁸⁰. The earlier archaeologists never published a description of their work to clarify the situation.

Wall paintings with a dado, decorative floral elements, and large-scale figures, were found in the North Church⁸¹. Now there remain only small fragments⁸². Pieces of decorated wood recently found in the North Church could have belonged to its decoration, or to that of the South Church⁸³. Larger pieces with the same painted geometric patterns in imitation of carved wood are now in the Louvre⁸⁴. They may have come from sanctuary and *khurus* screens for which some of the wooden framework survives⁸⁵. There is also a wooden framework between the columns of the nave⁸⁶.

If the wooden frieze with the monks' portraits came from the North Church, the question is: where were they displayed? The evidence of the chapels and of the South Church makes it likely that the portraits formed a frieze above the decorative wall dado. The scheme of wall decoration at Bawit, whether executed in wood, carved limestone or painted plaster, suggests this placement. How did their significance differ from the painted images of earlier generations of monks? Torp refers to the rule of Shenute for the White Monastery. Tablets contained the names and dates of recently deceased monks, so that the whole monastic community could commemorate them in the liturgy on the appropriate dates⁸⁷. This type of tablet has not been found at Bawit. However, hanging the monks' por-

⁷⁷ I would like to thank Dominique Bénazeth for showing me the photograph of this panel, and for supplying an image of it for this article.

⁷⁸ The width of the half-square is 35 cm, its preserved height is 16 cm, depth, 1.5 cm. Communication of Dominique Bénazeth, October 18, 2004.

⁷⁹ Chassinat 1911 is a volume of excavation photographs of the churches without commentary.

⁸⁰ Communication of Dominique Bénazeth, October 18, 2004.

⁸¹ Clédat 1999, Photo 196.

⁸² Laurent 2004, 63; Rutschowskaya, June 2004.

⁸³ M.-H. Rutschowskaya, 'Reprise des fouilles françaises à Baouit: Louvre/IFAO 2003'; Paper presented to the 8e Congrès international d'études coptes, Paris, June 28, 2004).

⁸⁴ Cf. Rutschowskaya 1992, nos 18, 19-22. Color Pl. of no. 18 on p. 22; Bolman, forthcoming, 8-9, suggests that these wooden panels formed part of a sanctuary screen.

⁸⁵ From new excavations in North Church (according to Rutschowskaya, n. 83 supra).

⁸⁶ Clédat 1999, Photo 186.

⁸⁷ Torp 1957, 535-536.

traits in the communal space of the church could keep the memory and example of the deceased before the whole community during their worship services. This may have been particularly important since the monks' actual burial places seem to have been outside the enclosure walls of the monastery⁸⁸.

Elizabeth Bolman has recently suggested to me that the monks' portraits might have been hung on an early *templon* beam as part of a sanctuary screen⁸⁹. The present remains in the church are the wooden framework for a different type of sanctuary and/or *khurus* screen. They seem to be too light to have supported a wooden portrait frieze. Perhaps the ongoing excavation will shed some light on this question.

The funerary portraits of Brother George and his two fellow monks are indebted to earlier traditions, in particular the painted Fayum portraits which were attached to the mummies of the dead in the first-third centuries A.D. The tempera technique, as well as many of the colors, is the same. However the renditions have become more schematic and frontal, with an emphasis on the spirituality of the image. In contrast to earlier practice, the funerary portraits in the Christian period are separated from the burials of the deceased. At Bawit, the only surviving funerary portraits of monks on wood are those of the Chanter Hor, Brother Mark, the anonymous monk, and Brother George. Chanter Hor's portrait was found in a large room that could have been used for prayers by a group of monks⁹⁰. The portraits of the other three monks appear to have been placed in one of the two churches used by the whole monastic community. These are the only wooden funerary portraits from Christian Egypt with a known context. Brother George's portrait shares many stylistic traits with the icon of Christ and Abbot Menas. The same workshop must have painted both of them. Even in their battered state, the portraits of Brother George and his monastic brethren are valuable additions to the small corpus of early Christian panel paintings from Egypt.

APPENDIX: LIST OF CHRISTIAN PANEL PAINTINGS ON WOOD

This list is based on the objects in Rassart-Debergh 1990, with additions and references to more recent publications. It does not include Christian subjects on furnishings or on architectural elements such as ceiling beams. These are listed in Rutschowskaya

1992, 36-37.

1. Brother George (Pls 1, 2).
The Newark Museum, Newark; inv. no. 83.42.
From the Monastery of St Apollo, Bawit?; sixth-seventh century.
2. Christ and Abbot Mena (Pl. 3).
Louvre, Paris; inv. no. E 11565.
From the Monastery of Apa Apollo, Bawit; end sixth-beginning seventh century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, 56, no. 1; Rutschowskaya 1992, no. 39; Rutschowskaya 1998, Fig. 3; Catalogue Paris/Cap d'Agde 2000, 109 (M.-H. Rutschowskaya); Zibawi 2003, 102.
3. Brother Mark (Pl. 4).
Musée des Jacobins, Auch; inv. no. 985.228.
From the Monastery of St Apollo, Bawit; sixth-seventh century.
Catalogue Paris/Cap d'Agde 2000, 110 (F. Ferrer-Joly).
4. Anonymous monk (Pl. 5).
Musée des Jacobins, Auch; inv. no. 985.229.
From the Monastery of St Apollo, Bawit; sixth-seventh century.
Catalogue Paris/Cap d'Agde 2000, 110 (F. Ferrer-Joly).
5. Master Hor the Chanter.
Found in Bawit Room 5; present location unknown; sixth-seventh century.
Maspero 1931-43, 18 and Pl. LVI B; Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 2, Fig. 13.
6. Top half of head of Christ.
Benaki Museum, Athens; inv. no. 8953.
Origin unknown.
Fotopoulos/Delivorrias 1997, Pl. 319.

⁸⁸ Bénazeth 1998, 59, citing Clédar's unpublished 1905 excavation season, which found simple burials, some with wooden crosses, to the south of the monastery complex.

⁸⁹ Personal communication, November 24, 2004, and Bolman forthcoming, (11-12) of which she kindly sent me a copy.

⁹⁰ Room 5; Maspero 1931-43; Vol. 1, 18; Vol. 2, Pl. XIII. View of room, Pl. XII.

7. St Theodore (?).
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; inv. no. J 68826.
From Antinöe; fifth-sixth century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 5,3, Fig. 19.

8. St Victor Stratelates.
Museo Egizio, Florence; inv. no. 13137.
From Antinöe; fifth-sixth century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 5,4, Fig. 20; Del Francia
Barocas 1998, 97-98, Pl. 84; Rutschowskaya 1998,
Fig. 34.

9. Archangel.
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; inv. no. J 68824.
From Antinöe; fifth-sixth century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 5,2, Fig. 18.

10. Woman.
Museo Egizio, Florence.
From Antinöe; fifth-sixth century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 5,5, Fig. 21.

11. Bearded Saint.
Egyptian Museum, Cairo; inv. no. 68825.
From Antinöe; fifth-sixth century.
Catalogue New York 1977, 551, no. 496; Rassart-
Debergh 1981, 271; Rassart-Debergh 1990, no.
5,1, Fig. 17; Skalova/Gabra 2003, 165.

12. Double-sided Icon: St Theodore and the
Archangel Gabriel.
Coptic Museum, Cairo; inv. no. 9083.
From Bawit?; sixth-seventh century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 3, Figs 14, 15; Van
Moorsel/Immerzeel/Langen 1994, no. 8, Pls. A1,
2b; Atalla 1998, 93; Skalova/Gabra 2004, 168-169.

13. St Mark the Evangelist.
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; inv. no. Fr 1129a.
From Fayum; sixth century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 7; Pl. 1; Catalogue Paris
2004, no. 56.

14. Archangel.
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; inv. no. Fr 1129b.
From Fayum; sixth century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 8, Fig. 23; Catalogue
Paris 2004, no. 57.

15. Bishop Abraham of Hermonthis.
Staatliche Museum, Berlin; inv. no. 6114.

Origin unknown; late sixth century.
Krause 1971, 110; Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 6,
Fig. 22; Catalogue Hamm 1996, 148; Parlasca
1999, 353, Pl. 243; Rutschowskaya 1998, Pl. 36.
Zibawi 2003, 102-103.

16. Icon with busts of a woman and St Theodore.
Staatliche Museum, Berlin, inv. no. I 4127.
Origin Fayum; sixth-seventh century.
Bauer/Strykowski 1905, 197-199, Fig. 35; Rassart-
Debergh 1990, no. 13, Fig. 28.

17. Military saint. Only bust portion preserved.
State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no.
18346.
Found in al-Bahnasa; sixth-seventh century.
Catalogue St Petersburg 1998, 146, Fig. 184.

18. Tondo: Bust of the Virgin.
Coptic Museum, Cairo; inv. no. 9104.
Origin unknown; fifth-seventh century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 9, Fig. 24; Van
Moorsel/Immerzeel/Langen 1992, no. 6, Pl. 2c;
Skalova/Gabra 2003, 167, A.

19. Tondo: Archangel Michael.
Coptic Museum, Cairo; inv. no. 9105.
Origin unknown; fifth-seventh century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, no. 10, Fig. 25; Van
Moorsel/Immerzeel/Langen 1992, no. 7, pl. 2d;
Catalogue Paris/Cap d'Agde 2000, 187;
Skalova/Gabra 2003, 167, C.

20. Tondo: Bust of Christ.
Landesmuseum, Mainz; inv. no. 134.
Origin unknown; fifth-seventh century.
Rassart-Debergh 1990, Fig. 26; Catalogue Hamm
1996, no. 111 (A. Effenberger); Skalova/Gabra
2003, 167, B.

21. Head of a female saint
Private collection
Origin unknown; sixth-seventh century (van Rijn
1980: fourth century)
Van Rijn 1980, 42, 166.

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A Note to the Provenance of the Panel of “Brother George the Scribe”

Gertrud J.M. VAN LOON

During research in the library of the Jesuit Fathers in Cairo (Collège de la Sainte-Famille) in March 2005, a glass negative of the panel of Brother George was found in the archive of father Michel Jullien S.J. (fig. 1)¹.

On the photograph, the panel was set in a wooden frame and it was probably covered with glass, which points to being part of a collection. The preservation seems to be much the same as the present state. The negative is kept in a box with (glass) negatives of various churches and monasteries in Egypt, all taken by father Jullien. There is no proof

that he did take this photograph, but its presence in his collection makes this probable.

Father Michel Jullien was born in Lyon, France, in 1827. He came to Egypt in 1880 where he founded the Collège de la Sainte-Famille in 1892. Apart from a short visit to Syria, he did not leave Egypt. He died in Cairo in 1911. Father Jullien studied Coptic churches and monasteries, traveled

¹ Father Jacques Masson S.J. is most warmly thanked for his help and permission to publish the photograph.



extensively and published reports of his journeys². The last dated entry in his archive is a report of an “Excursion avec le P. Rolland en Février 1901” (Unpublished manuscript fol. 111)³.

Susan Auth argues convincingly that the panel of Brother George in Newark, together with the two panels in Auch, came from Bawit. Jean Clédât started excavations in Bawit in 1901. Before that time, the museum in Giza had numerous objects from Bawit on display and, according to Clédât, received some new objects from that site every year. Subsequently, objects and papyri said to have come from Bawit appeared on the art market and were acquired by museums and private collectors⁴.

Although the Jesuit Fathers own a small collection of antiquities, this panel was not part of their collection⁵. Father Jullien must have seen it somewhere and photographed it. If this negative existed in 1901 (the last dated reference in the Jullien-archive), the panel had found its way to a collector before Clédât started excavating.

The glass negative in Cairo does not throw light on when and where the panel was found nor on how and when it traveled to the United States. It can only be stated that Brother George was most probably still in Egypt around 1900.

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² Munier 1940, 141-142; Martin 1972, 119.

³ Martin 1972, 119 n. 1. Father Maurice Martin S.J. organised the Jullien-archive.

⁴ Clédât 1902, 526. See also Bénazeth 1997, 43-44 and Clackson 2000, 7.

⁵ Information: Father Jacques Masson S.J.

North-West Church in Hippos (Sussita), Israel: Five Years of Archaeological Research (2000 – 2004)

Jolanta MŁYNARCZYK, Mariusz BURDAJEWICZ

Two kilometres to the east of the modern kibbutz Ein Gev on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee in Israel there rises a picturesque mountain with the ruins of an ancient city on its top (at ca 350 m above the level of the lake; Pl. 1)¹. Founded in the Hellenistic period, it was known under the Greek name of Hippos (or Antiochia Hippos during Seleucid rule) or under the Aramaic name of Sussita. After the conquest of the area by the Romans in 66/67 B.C., the city became one of the Greco-Roman towns of the Decapolis group. By the time of the council of Seleucia (A.D. 359) Hippos was already known as an episcopal see².

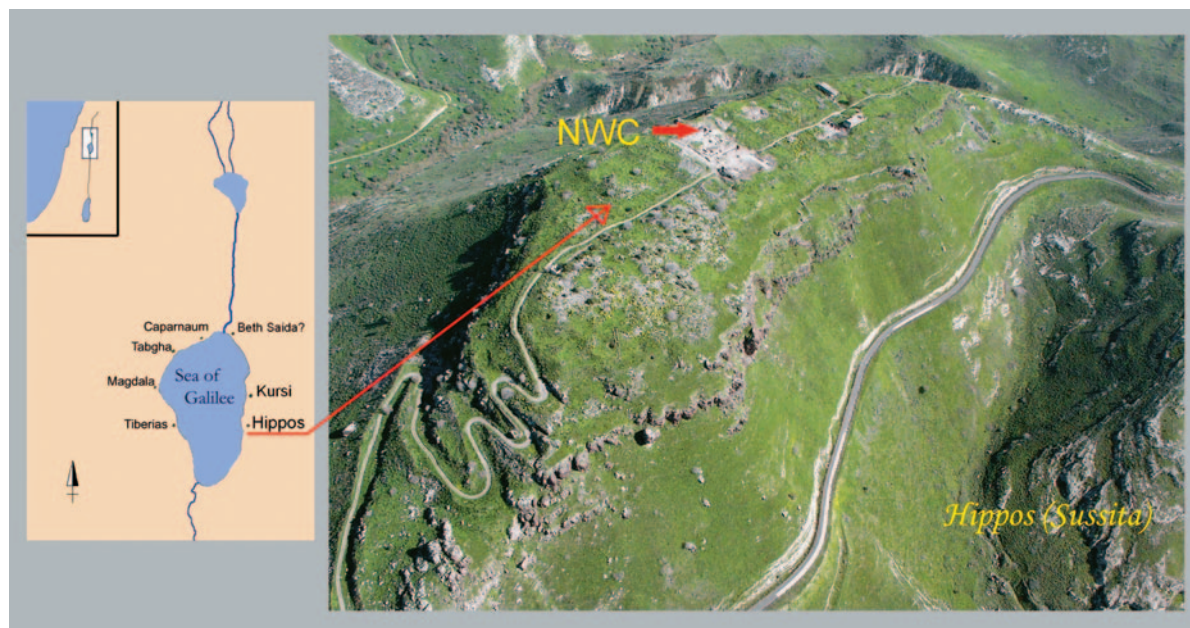
In 2000, archaeological excavations at Hippos began as a joint Israeli-Polish project headed by Arthur Segal (Zinman Institute, University of Haifa), with Jolanta Młynarczyk (Polish Academy of Sciences and Institute of Archaeology of

Warsaw University) and Mariusz Burdajewicz (National Museum in Warsaw) as the co-directors; since 2001, the team has been joined by Mark Schuler from Concordia University in St Paul, Minnesota.

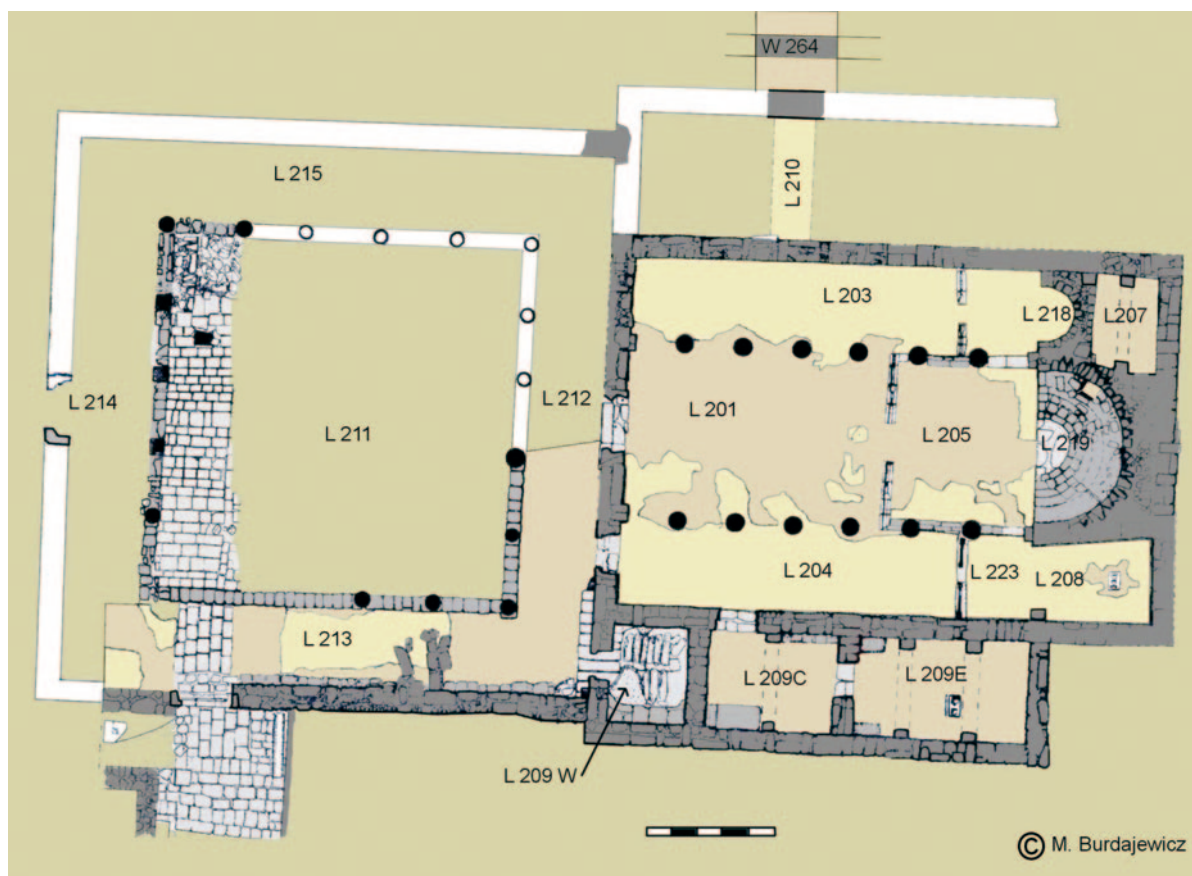
Following the fifth season of fieldwork in September 2004, the time is ripe for an assessment of the hitherto gathered archaeological data pertaining to the church complex (styled the North-West Church) unearthed by the Polish team (Pl. 2). The entire basilica has been uncovered along with the southern 'wing' (annexes), a small section of the northern wing, as well as parts of the atrium.

¹ Our warm thanks go to Ms Iwona Zych, Warsaw, for revising the English of this paper.

² Bagatti 1971, 94; see also Epstein 1993.



*Pl. 1. Geographical situation of Hippos and view of the site with location of the North-West Church
(aerial photo courtesy by Michael Eisenberg, University of Haifa)*



Pl. 2. Plan of remains of the North-West Church, 2004 (yellow: mosaic floors; white: unexcavated walls)

Besides the church itself, we have explored an area outside the northern wall of the church and a part of an olive oil and wine press abutting the church compound on the south³.

LOCATION AND GENERAL PLAN OF THE NORTH-WEST CHURCH

The church was built in what was an important spot of the city, north of the main public square (*agora*), on the site of what appears to have been a pagan sanctuary. Among the literary sources confirming such practices, one can quote *Panarion* of St Epiphanius from Salamis mentioning Joseph

from Tiberias, who in his own city tried unsuccessfully to transform a temple dedicated to Hadrian into a church⁴. In turn, the archaeological record has yielded evidence of the church in coastal Dora being built on the remains of an earlier pagan sanctuary dedicated to Apollo, and later to Asclepius⁵.

It may have been the existing urban or architectural arrangement that, to our mind, enforced certain peculiarities of plan, such as a disproportionately big atrium compared to the basilica and an additional entrance to the atrium situated on its southern side (the main entrance was in the middle of the western side of the atrium). In the Umayyad period, however, the city may have already been changing into a village-like settlement, if the presence of a vast wine and olive-press installation is any proof.

The North-West Church is a three-aisled basilica flanked by northern and southern wings and preceded by a spacious square atrium consisting of a courtyard surrounded by four porticoes with six

³ Segal/Młynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2000; Młynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004. See also the website: www.hippos.w.pl or www.susyam.webpark.pl.

⁴ *PG*, 41, 425-428; Bagatti 1971, 71-72; cf. also Manns 1990, 557.

⁵ Dauphin 1999.

columns to a side (Pl. 2). The basilica with its internal apse is divided into three aisles by two rows of six basalt columns each. It seems clear that the northern and southern wings flanking the basilica were an integral part of the original design of the compound. The northern annexes of the church have not yet been uncovered; the southern 'wing', however, is known to have consisted of three rooms. A doorway connected the central and eastern rooms and they were accessible from the southern aisle only. The entrance to the western room, situated on axis with the southern portico, led from the atrium. The room was planned apparently as a 'funerary chapel', with twin cist tombs constructed below the floor and covered with basalt beams. The overall plan of the church compound is best paralleled by that of the church at neighbouring Kursi⁶.

In terms of relative chronology, the existence of the church was comprised between that of the pagan sanctuary and the earthquake that destroyed the town of Sussita. The date of this event, assumed generally to have taken place on January 18 of A.D. 749⁷, has been confirmed by objects – coins and pottery, the latter including oil lamps – found in sealed contexts deposits in the church.

CONSTRUCTION CHARACTERISTICS

Both limestone and basalt blocks were used in the construction of the church walls, as well as smaller undressed stones. The central apse was built of basalt ashlars; some walls were constructed entirely of limestone blocks (e.g. most of the southern wall of the church along with the southern wing), others of limestone blocks on a basalt substructure (among these, the eastern wall of the church, apparently built upon an earlier wall of basalt ashlars). Mixing basalt and limestone of different size (mostly medium to small) and shape (often irregular) seemed to be a feature of the latest additions to the church architecture.

The doorways (thresholds and doorjambs) were constructed of basalt material, mostly reused (including architrave blocks used as doorjambs). Basalt was also used in the construction of the engaged pillars supporting the arches in two rooms of the southern annexe (209C and 209E), the arches of the northern sacristy (Room 207), the entrance arch of the southern sacristy (Room 208), as well as the pilasters that carried the springing of the outer arcades in the colonnades. The arches of

the southern annexe and the northern sacristy were constructed of limestone, while the arch in the southern sacristy was built of basalt blocks. The columns in both the basilica and the atrium were composed of basalt drums with basalt capitals; in the basilica, they stood on bases of white marble.

The existence of galleries above the aisles is securely attested by large pieces of white monochrome mosaics lying ca 0.20-0.30 m above the floor of the two aisles. Similar evidence of an upper storey was found, for example, in the hermitage of *begumenos* Procapis on Mount Nebo⁸. As no remains of gallery banisters were found in our church, they may be presumed to have been made of timber.

The presence of the galleries seems to suggest that there were no clerestory windows above the nave; if so, the only source of light for the nave would be the windows situated in the facade, and, indirectly, also the windows in the walls of the galleries. In this case, the lighting of the ground floor in the aisles would be even weaker still, some light coming only from the nave and the outer doors (when open). This kind of disposition of the windows in a church is depicted on a mosaic in the Church of Saint Stephen in Um al-Rasas (Kastron Mefaa)⁹. It should be noted, however, that the reconstruction of both the Northern and the Central churches in Herodion, which were also provided with galleries, nevertheless considers the presence of a *clerestorium*¹⁰.

Unlike the basilica with its gabled roof covered with terracotta tiles (as attested by numerous finds of both *tegulae* and *imbrices*), the side wings had flat roofs, a fact confirmed by the scarcity of roof tiles excavated from the debris in the southern annexe. The roof was presumably made of clay, lime mortar and organic material (reeds) on wooden beams supported on stone arches. The annexes must have been provided with windows, the possible location of which (at the top of the walls?) must be considered in strict correlation with the visual reconstruction of the adjoining winery.

⁶ Tzaferis 1983, plans 4-5.

⁷ Amiran/Kallner 1950, 223-246; cf. also Tsafrir/Foerster 1991, 127.

⁸ Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2002, Fig. 36; Piccirillo/Alliata 1990, Figs 10-11.

⁹ Piccirillo 1993, Fig. 347.

¹⁰ Netzer 1990, Figs 4 and 15.

DECORATION AND LITURGICAL FURNITURE OF THE CHURCH

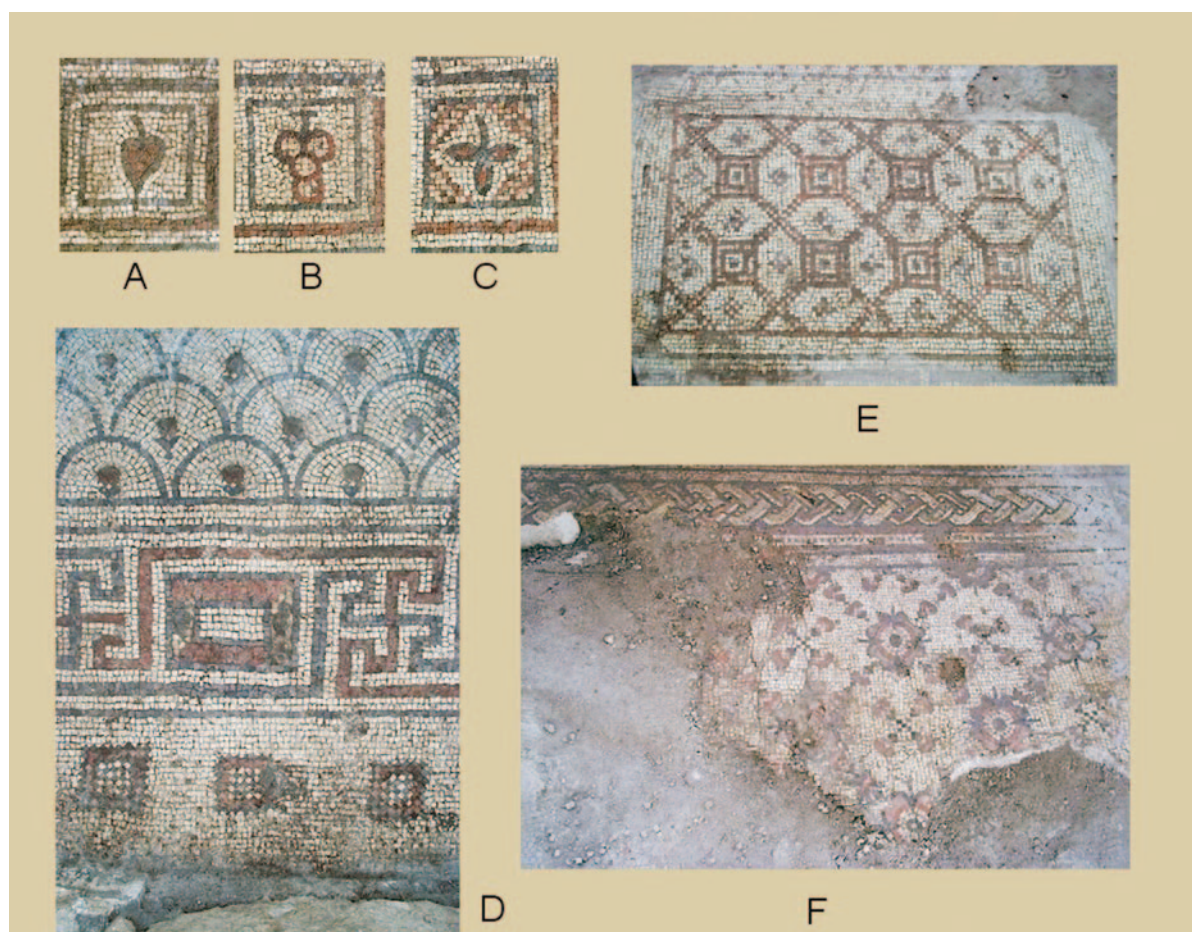
The architectural decoration of the church was apparently limited to the capitals of the columns, which represented a regional Byzantine-period version of the Ionic order¹¹. The basalt stone of the colonnades in the basilica was covered with painted plaster. Specifically, one of the capitals still preserves some red-painted plaster above a wreath of green leaves¹², while the column

drums have remains of green ornaments (vegetal scrolls or imitation of veined green marble?). Many fragments of painted plaster pertaining to the decoration of the walls were found in the debris of the northern aisle, the southern sacristy (the *martyrion* chapel), and in the easternmost part of the *diakonikon*.

Mosaics

The floors of the basilica and the porticoes of the atrium were paved with mosaics. Of the mosaic floor in the nave only a few patches remain. They indicate that the central ‘carpet’ (or carpets) was decorated with a network of rosettes and buds¹³, framed by a rich quadriplaited guilloche (Pl. 3F)¹⁴. The chancel area or *bema*, which projects up to the middle of the fifth intercolumniation (counting from the west), was no less destroyed than the nave.

- ¹¹ Comparable to the Ionic capitals from Der’a in southern Syria: Dentzer-Feydy 1990, Figs 39-41.
¹² Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2003, Fig. 50.
¹³ Avi-Yonah 1933-35, H7.
¹⁴ Similar to B12, Avi-Yonah 1933-35.



Pl. 3. Samples of motives used in decoration of the mosaic floors in the church (A-D: northern aisle; E: one of the northern intercolumniations; F chancel area of the nave)

To judge by the preserved parts of this mosaic floor, the pattern was similar as in the nave¹⁵.

The decoration of the mosaic floor in the northern aisle consists of a large central panel filled with fan-shaped elements outlined in dark¹⁶, each with a flower bud inside (Pl. 3D). The panel frame is filled with double swastikas¹⁷, alternating with rectangles, each of the latter containing different, purely geometrical motifs with the exception of three featuring floral elements (grape, heart-shaped

leaf, and trefoil leaf). The only intercolumniation panel of the northern aisle that has survived, the fourth one counting from the west, is filled with eight interlacing octagons, each containing a double square in the centre and a diamond on its four

¹⁵ Segal/Młynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2000, Figs 36-37.

¹⁶ Avi-Yonah 1933-35, J3.

¹⁷ Avi-Yonah 1933-35, A19; see also Ovadiah/Ovadia 1987, 232.



Pl. 4. Mosaic inscriptions commemorating donations by Petros (A), Hedora (B) and the deceased (?) deaconess Antona (C)

sides¹⁸. The same pattern occurs also in the narthex of the church in Bahan/Khirbet Kafr Sibb¹⁹. Similar motifs appear on the sixth-century mosaics in the churches of Khan Khaldé and Zahrani, both in Lebanon, as well as a late fifth-century mosaic in the church of Mezra'a el-'Oulia in Syria²⁰.

The floor of the northern apse is filled with a tri-colour (red, black and yellowish/white) chessboard pattern²¹. In the southern aisle, the mosaic floor continues the general pattern of the northern aisle. The central 'carpet', in almost perfect condition, is filled with scales, each with a rose bud inside²², similar to those in the northern aisle, but devoid of dark outlines. All the way around the central carpet of scales runs a simple guilloche frame²³.

The intercolumniations of the southern aisle contain rectangular mosaic panels. The first intercolumniation (counting from the west) has a 'diagonal' pattern consisting of small squares²⁴. The decorative panel of the second intercolumniation seems to be divided into six (?) octagons. Only two of them are preserved: one contains a square filled with diagonals, another depicts probably an apple or pomegranate. In the third intercolumniation panel, a rectangle contains a diamond inscribed with interlacing lines. The fourth intercolumniation panel virtually repeats the pattern of the first one. The pattern of the fifth intercolumniation is rather illegible; it consists probably of a combination of diamonds and crosslets. Finally, a frieze of simple geometrical figures composed of crosslets and tiny triangles runs along the southern side of the chancel.

The floor of this aisle contains also two mosaic inscriptions in Greek, which commemorate donations made by two individuals²⁵. A one-line inscription in a *tabula ansata* extending across the aisle at

the height of the fifth intercolumniation and facing west, commemorates an offering made by Petros (Pl. 4A). Another inscription was placed at the inner edge of the aisle, in front of the third intercolumniation, but facing the nave, not the aisle. It is also written in one line and mentions a woman by the name of Hedora (or Heliodora?; Pl. 4B).

The mosaic floor of the southern sacristy is filled with a 'carpet' of slightly trapezoidal outline which repeats the pattern of the southern aisle with the only difference that here the 'guilloche' border is thicker and is framed on both sides by a thin black line. Additionally, the space between the mosaic 'carpet' and the walls of the chapel is of unequal width, and is partly decorated with alternating lozenges and diamonds, the latter with crosslets protruding from the angles.

The mosaic floor under the archway separating the southern sacristy from the chancel part of the southern aisle was repaired at some time, but since no attention was paid to the proper restoration of the original pattern, it will of necessity remain unknown to us.

The mosaic preserved in the southern portico of the atrium displays a 'carpet' of simple geometrical composition: a diagonal grid of squares outlined with a double line of black cubes, each square containing a diamond (?) at the centre²⁶. The same mosaic pattern is found in the monastery at Bet Shean²⁷, in the church at Horvat Hesheq in Upper Galilee²⁸ and in the narthex of the church in Nebha in Lebanon, probably of the earlier seventh century²⁹. The colours used in the execution of the atrium floor were limited to white, black, blueish-grey, pink and orange-brown. At mid-width of the corridor, a Greek inscription is inserted in a diagonal grid; it was intended to be read while moving eastwards, toward Room 209W and the basilica. The text (black letters in five lines comprised in a square frame consisting of a narrow black line) commemorates an offering (*prosfora*, clearly a financial contribution to the paving of this portico) made for the eternal rest (*huper anapauseos*) of Antona (misspelling for 'Antonia?') the deaconess (Pl. 4C).

Chancel screens

Near the eastern end of the northern aisle, the chancel screen was found, installed on the mosaic as the final arrangement of the church. The marble screen was set in a base built of limestone, and consisted of two panels and two screen posts (each 1.09 m

¹⁸ Avi Yonah 1933-35, H3; cf. also Ovadiah/Ovadiah 1987, 244.

¹⁹ Ovadiah/Ovadiah 1987, Pl. 7.

²⁰ Donceel-Voûte 1988, 380, 430, 181-182, Figs 358, 429, 154 respectively.

²¹ Segal/Młynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2001, Figs 34-35.

²² Avi-Yonah 1933-35, pattern J3.

²³ Avi-Yonah 1933-35, pattern B2.

²⁴ Avi-Yonah 1933-35, pattern A9 and A15.

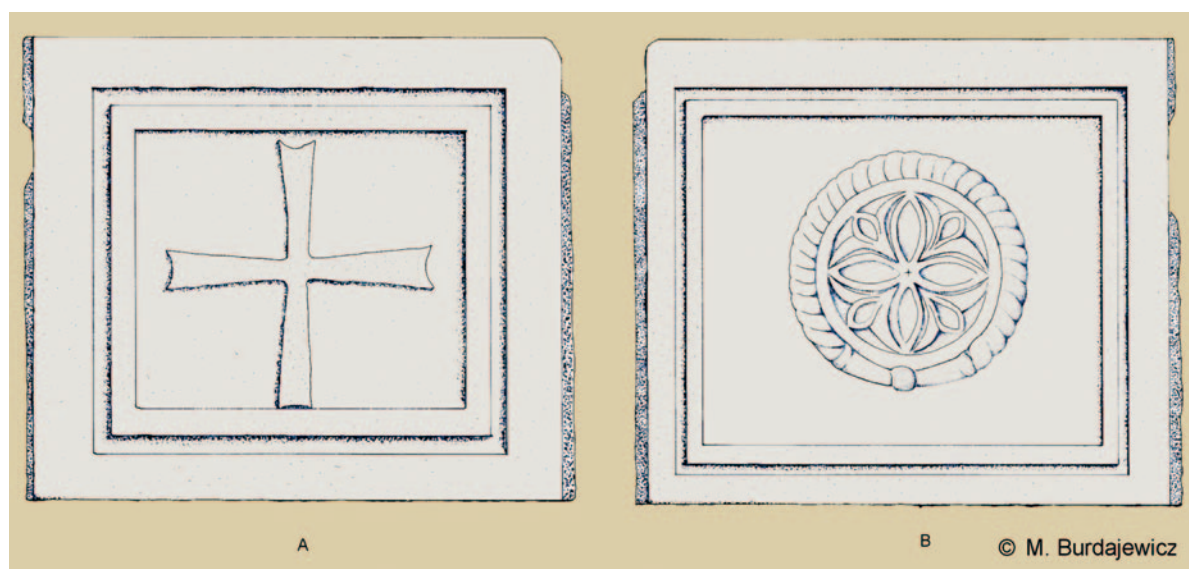
²⁵ Lajtar 2002.

²⁶ Ovadiah/Ovadiah 1987, 165, Type A.

²⁷ FitzGerald 1939, Pl. XII.

²⁸ Aviam 1990, Fig. 24.

²⁹ Donceel-Voûte 1988, 396, Fig. 381.



Pl. 5. Two sides of a marble chancel screen from the northern aisle: the eastward side (A) and the westward one (B)

high). The southern chancel screen, broken into three restorable parts (dimensions: 0.80 × 0.95 m), has a cross in relief on its eastward face, and a rosette in a wreath on the westward one (Pl. 5). The wreath is rendered in a schematised style common to the churches of the Byzantine period (see below), while the rosette is combined with a fleur-de-lis. A similar motif, in which, however, the cross is more clearly accentuated, appears on the panels from the church at Horvat Hesheq³⁰, from the Temple Mount excavations in Jerusalem³¹, from Nessana³² and from the church of the Deacon Thomas at 'Uyun Musa in the Mount Nebo region³³.

Of the northern chancel screen in the northern aisle only a corner remains. The inward sides of the chancel posts have iron rings fixed to them to pass a chain (?) closing off the entrance to the sanctuary. It seems that the posts used to carry two colonettes, comparable to those found in the southern aisle (see below).

At the height of the sixth column, the southern aisle is closed by a marble balustrade belonging to a lateral chancel (Pl. 6). It consists of two screens and four posts fixed to their base with pieces of lead. The base is built of reused marble blocks derived from a monumental building of Roman date (second century A.D.?), to judge by the remains of relief decoration on the eastern faces of two long blocks. Of these, the southern one still preserves a deeply drilled

ornament of acanthus scrolls (Pl. 7). The southern chancel screen (0.90 m high) was found standing *in situ* between two posts. Its western face has a 'Maltese' cross with grooved arms inside a simple ring and a wreath composed of a triple row of laurel leaves tied with a ribbon (Pl. 6). Such a laurel wreath surrounding a cross (*stephanostaurion*) is common on chancel screens in the churches of the provinces of *Palaestina* and *Arabia*. Just to mention some examples: from Sussita itself; in the church of the Monastery of Kyra Maria, Tel Iztabba³⁴; Khirbet el-Mird³⁵, as well from the Temple Mount excavations in Jerusalem³⁶; Mampsis³⁷ and in the Petra Church³⁸. The screen's eastern face bears a similar cross (its arms, however, left ungrooved) surmounting the tripartite Golgotha mound; the left-hand side of this panel left unfinished, with traces of chiselling (Pl. 7). A close parallel to this representation is found on chancel screens from Tabgha³⁹, Horvat

³⁰ Aviam 1990, Fig. 20.

³¹ Peleg 2003, Pl. I.21. 6.

³² Colt 1962, Pl. XIX:5.

³³ Acconci 1998, 515, 534, cat. nos 125, 127, 169.

³⁴ Israeli/Mevorah 2000, 73-74 and 130.

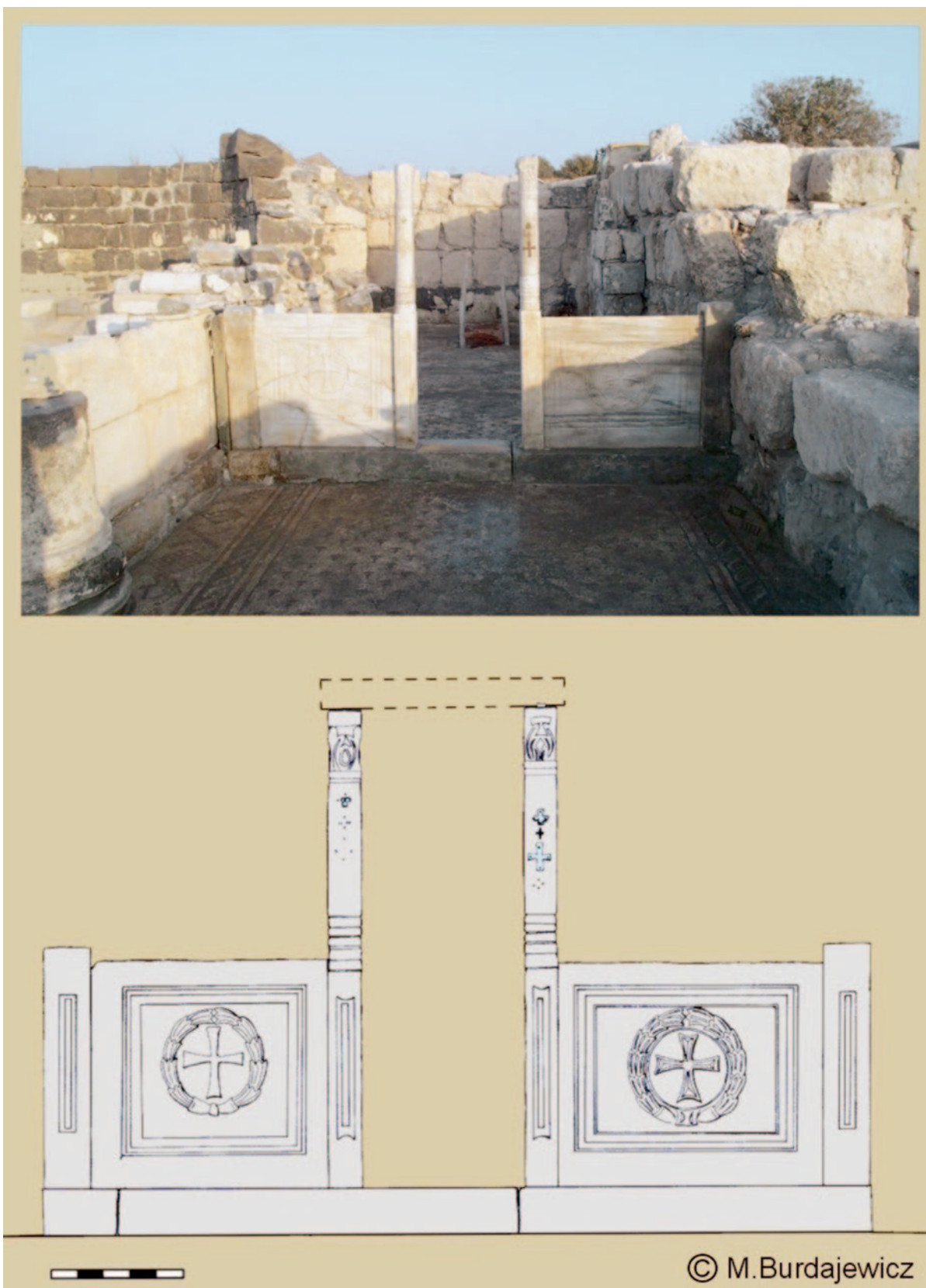
³⁵ Bagatti 1971, Fig. 115.

³⁶ Peleg 2003, 135-139.

³⁷ Negev 1988, Fig. 9.

³⁸ Kanellopoulos/Schick 2001, 195-197, Figs 5 and 10.

³⁹ Bagatti 1962, 121, Fig. 16:5.



Pl. 6. Restored chancel screen of the southern aisle complete with columnettes



Pl. 7. Eastern side of the southern chancel screen in the southern aisle; reused Roman-period block with acanthus scrolls



Pl. 8. Detail of the columnettes of the southern aisle, with silver crosses fixed on them

Bata in Carmiel of the sixth century⁴⁰, and Khirbet ed-Deir⁴¹. A similar representation, flanked by gazelles, appears also on a chancel screen from the sixth-century Church of St Lazarus in Nahariya⁴². From Horvat Karkara, Galilee, comes a fragment decorated with a ram lowering its head before the cross which surmounts the tripartite Golgotha hillock⁴³.

The northern chancel screen (0.90 m high) was found broken into several pieces by stones tumbling from the southern wall. On the western face there is a representation of a 'Maltese' cross in a bound wreath, differing from the other screen only in the cross arms not being grooved and the wreath lacking a ring inside. The screen's back (eastern) side was left undecorated.

The outer chancel posts (0.92 m high) are reused small pillars with vertical flutings on one face and

stylised acanthus capitals. The inner monolithic posts were considerably higher and of a different form. Their upper parts, from slightly above the level of the screen top, were shaped as colonettes with moulded bases and 'Corinthian' capitals. Similar capitals of the chancel screen post are known from the church at Horvat Hesheq, Upper Galilee⁴⁴, and, rather more elaborate, from the Theotokos chapel on Mount Nebo⁴⁵. Together with a horizontal bar (of wood?) which they used to carry, they formed a sort of doorway, its total height

⁴⁰ Israeli/Mevorakh 2000, 42.

⁴¹ Habas 1999, Pl. 3: 3-4.

⁴² Dauphin/Edelstein 1993, 51.

⁴³ Israeli/Mevorah 2000, 73-74.

⁴⁴ Aviam 1990, Fig. 7.

⁴⁵ Acconci 1998, 507, cat. nos 99-102.

amounting to 2 m (0.18 m for the chancel base and 1.82 m for the inner post-colonettes) above the level of the mosaic floor. The broken colonettes were found in the debris with small votive crosses made of silver still affixed to their shafts with bronze pegs: three crosses (and holes to mount the fourth one) on the southern colonette (Pl. 8), two crosses (plus holes for the third one) on the northern colonette. Evidence for fixing the metal crosses on chancel screen posts comes also from the church at Horvat Hesheq⁴⁶ and from the Mount Nebo excavations⁴⁷. From the eastern faces of the inner posts there protrude iron rings fixed to lead pegs, intended to mount a low wooden door: two rings for hinges in the southern post, and one for a hook in the northern post.

Reliquaries

The two reliquaries found one on top of the other in the eastern part of the southern sacristy identify this room as a *martyrion* chapel. The upper reliquary is a sarcophagus-like chest of white marble (L. 0.25 m, W. 0.16 m, H. 0.10 m), divided into three rectangular compartments, and covered with a gabled lid finished with four acroteria. In the top of the lid, there is a circular opening into which a bronze pin was inserted. Inside, in one of the compartments, a few tiny bones were found (Pl. 9). This reliquary represents the most common sarcophagus-like type known from the churches in the provinces of *Palaestina* and *Arabia*⁴⁸.

The lower reliquary in Loc. 208 is bigger, made of a pink limestone block (L. 0.56 m, W. 0.45 m, H. 0.24 m) inserted into the floor of the room (Pl. 10). Its southern part was destroyed by falling blocks during the earthquake. Inside a raised edge, the upper surface has three compartments, each of them originally with its own lid. Above the central

bowl-shaped depression, a broken circular lid was found. Made of raw beige clay (with the addition of an organic material, apparently straw), it had a central opening. Under this lid, fragments of another circular lid with an opening in the centre were found. The bowl, shaped like an inverted cone, was filled with earth, brown-coloured in the upper part, and reddish brown at the bottom. The lateral compartments, of which only the northern one survived intact, were rectangular. The well-preserved northern compartment had a rectangular lid exactly fitting its rim; in addition to this, there was also an upper lid, made of a broken slab of the same soft pink stone.

On the western side of the reliquary a 'Greek' cross was represented in relief; marking the centre of the cross is a grooved square with a circular hollow at the centre (possibly for inserting a gem). At the four corners of the reliquary, square holes for marble legs were sunk into the mosaic floor. Two of the legs were recomposed from smaller fragments to their total height of 1.10 m. Two others are preserved only partially (Pl. 10). All of them are carved in a similar way: they have cubic bases, above which there is a simple decoration consisting of horizontal incisions forming three strips; the shaft which is slightly ellipsoidal in section, is crowned with a capital decorated on all four sides with a sort of schematic lotus flower. The leaves, two on each side, curve inward forming a mandorla-like ornament. The decorative motif is frequent on the capitals of altar legs in the Byzantine period. However, the execution can vary from a naturalistic style, like in Nessana⁴⁹ and the Mount Nebo region⁵⁰, to a very schematic one, like in the monastery at Khirbet ed-Deir⁵¹ and on Mount Nebo⁵².

No fragments of an altar table supported on these legs were found, unless an originally marble altar was replaced later by a wooden one. The type of reliquary, of relatively large dimensions, inserted into the floor, is rather rare in Palestine, and the closest parallels can be found in some churches in Jordan, for example in Gerasa, in the church of Sts Peter and Paul and in the church of Sts Cosmas and Damian⁵³. A third reliquary, made of white marble, was found on the floor of the northern apse. It is of the same type exactly as that found in the *martyrion* chapel described above; one of its three compartments contained a small glass bottle with tiny pieces of bones⁵⁴.

⁴⁶ Aviam 1990, 358, 370, Figs 8 and 27.

⁴⁷ Acconci 1998, 509, cat. no. 105.

⁴⁸ Burdajewicz 2004, 278-279; see also Michel 2001, 72-78; Bagatti 1971, 253.

⁴⁹ Colt 1962, Pl. XVIII:3.

⁵⁰ Acconci 1998, cat. nos 99-101.

⁵¹ Habas 1999, 119, Pl. 1.

⁵² Acconci 1998, 534, cat. no. 173.

⁵³ Kraeling 1938, 245, 253, Pl. LI:a; Michel 2001, 74, 257, Figs 237, 238. See also Burdajewicz 2004, Figs. 6-7.

⁵⁴ Segal/Młynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2000, Figs 47-48.



Pl. 9. Marble reliquary from the martyrion chapel with bronze pin



Pl. 10. Limestone reliquary inserted in the floor of the martyrion chapel with restored supports of a mensa

Marble furniture found in the church

In the course of the excavations, many stone fragments of the original furniture of the church were found in different contexts in the church. The most important group was uncovered in the northern apse. Apart from the reliquary mentioned above, the assemblage included the marble supports (legs) and a large part of the *mensa* of an altar table, all broken into pieces. The altar table represented a type very common in the Byzantine period. The *mensa* is rectangular and shaped with external frames of different width (narrow band, fillet and *cyma reversa*) and a wide sunken surface in the centre. The best parallels with similar mouldings can be found, e.g. in the monastery at Khirbet ed-Deir in the Judean desert⁵⁵, at Mount Nebo⁵⁶ and in Petra⁵⁷. The table was supported by four colonettes which could be restored to their full height; their shafts are oval-sectioned, while the capitals are decorated with schematised vegetal elements (stylised lotus flowers) and terminate in a cubic abacus. The bases of the colonettes are square, and right above them, there are three simple incisions, which form smooth strips of decoration. The parallel colonettes come from the church at Horvat Hesheq⁵⁸, Khirbet ed-Deir⁵⁹, Mount Olive in Jerusalem⁶⁰, Mampsis⁶¹, Mount Nebo/Ayn al-Kanisah⁶² and Petra⁶³.

Bronze lighting devices

A bronze oil lamp in the shape of a dove found on the floor of the chancel area of the northern aisle apparently used to hang between the chancel screen

and the altar (Pl. 11). A similar lamp is part of the collection of the Flagellation Museum at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem⁶⁴. Another parallel is constituted by a lamp found in the North Cemetery in Firka, Nubia, dated to the fifth and sixth centuries⁶⁵.

Two complete bronze chandeliers or *polykandela* were found in the church. One of them, complete with chain, was discovered below the blocks of the fallen arch, which separated the *martyrion* chapel from the chancel area of the southern aisle (Pl. 12A). It takes on the form of a circular frame with six round openings for inserting glass oil lamps. The outer rim has three loops to hold chains ending in hooks. A close parallel comes from Beth Shean⁶⁶. Another *polykandelon* was found in upright position against the eastern wall of the *diakonikon*; lacking its chain, it must have been stored in this place as an item of value. It is of a larger diameter, intended for nine glass oil lamps. The frame is composed of circular openings for lamps alternating with solid triangles (Pl. 12B)⁶⁷.

Of interest is a group of bronze objects uncovered in the *diakonikon* in the southern wing of the church. It included a bronze jug or decanter typical of the Umayyad period (Pl. 13A). Closely similar vessels are known from Pella, dated to the second quarter of the eighth century⁶⁸, from Beth Shean, dated to around A.D. 749⁶⁹ and from the Monastery of Saint Martyrius at Ma'ale Adummim⁷⁰. Another object, a bronze censer (Pl. 13B), is of a common Byzantine type, shaped as a bowl with ribbed body and three loops on the rim for a suspension chain (which was not found). A parallel censer comes from Jericho⁷¹; other examples of the type are known, among others, from Saqqara in Egypt and Amman in Jordan⁷². The third bronze find is a medium-sized bell with an iron heart, similar to a bell from Beth Shean (Pl. 13C)⁷³.

The furniture of the church such as the marble screens and posts of the lateral chancels, three reliquaries, the altar table, bronze lighting devices and many other objects (not mentioned here) of metal, glass (Pl. 14) and pottery (Pl. 15), were found *in situ* in sealed destruction deposits. Their role in identifying the function of particular rooms of the church compound in the final period of its existence is crucial (see below).

⁵⁵ Habas 1999, 119-123, Pl. 1.

⁵⁶ Acconci 1998, 489, cat. no. 61.

⁵⁷ Kanellopoulos/Schick 2001, Figs 6-7, 21.

⁵⁸ Aviam 1990, Fig. 7.

⁵⁹ Habas 1999, 119-123, Pl. 1.

⁶⁰ Bagatti 1971, Fig. 123.

⁶¹ Negev 1988, Photo 98.

⁶² Acconci 1998, 534, cat. no. 173.

⁶³ Kanellopoulos/Schick 2001, Fig. 23.

⁶⁴ Bagatti 1939, 54.

⁶⁵ Kirwan 1935, 194, Pl. XXI.

⁶⁶ FitzGerald 1931, Pls XXVII: 4 and XXXVII: 4; cf. also Israeli/Mevorah 2000, 108, 109.

⁶⁷ See also parallel from Beth Shean: FitzGerald 1931, XXXVII: 1.

⁶⁸ Smith/Day 1989, 118, Pl. 62.9.

⁶⁹ Tsafirir/Foerster 1991, 127, Fig. 117.

⁷⁰ Magen 1993, 193.

⁷¹ Israeli/Mevorah 2000, 98; Bagatti 1971, Fig. 135.

⁷² Bénazeth 2001, 292-294, nos 249-251.

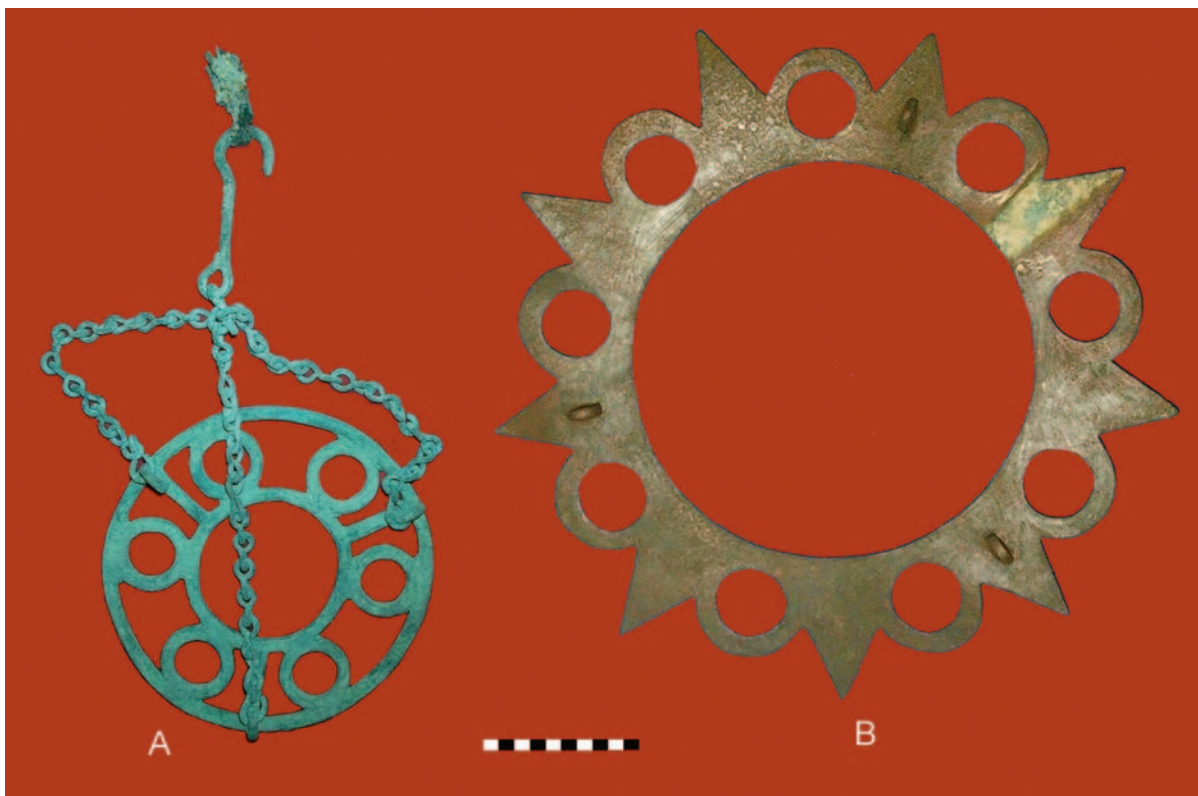
⁷³ FitzGerald 1931, Pl. XXXVIII: 2.



Pl. 11. Bronze lamp found in the chancel area of the northern aisle



Pl. 13. Bronze objects found in the diakonikon



Pl. 12. Two bronze polykandela, found in the entrance of the martyrion chapel (A) and stored in the diakonikon (B)



Pl. 14. Glass vessels from the church



Pl. 16. Pottery vessels found in the diakonikon

THE PHASING OF THE CHURCH SITE

The phasing of the church site is based mainly on relative chronology, with very few points of reference to absolute dating.

Pre-church structures

1. The earliest remains at our site, apparently of Hellenistic date, are few and cannot be dated with any precision due to the lack of sufficient material from sealed deposits. One can mention parts of a pavement (?) re-used as a floor in the cist tombs in Room 209W, as well as an east-west wall and an earthen floor associated with it under the main chancel of the basilica⁷⁴, originally believed to be of Early Roman date.

2. Better legible remains are those dating to the Early Roman period. They include another, upper floor found under the chancel area, and associated

with a wall constructed of basalt blocks (later used as the western substructure of the apse). This floor corresponds with the level of another floor (F 268) located below the atrium, securely dated to the beginning of the first century A.D. and clearly associated with the western wall of what appears to be the *naos* (cella) of an Early Roman temple. Parts of the eastern wall of the same building were reused as two benches in Room 209E. Other elements apparently pertaining to the same architectural phase include an east-west wall (W 264), possibly a portico stylobate and associated floors discovered just to the north of the church⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ See Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2003, 32, Fig. 19; Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2004.

⁷⁵ Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2001, 11, Fig. 47.

North-West Church

1. The date for the construction of the church has yet to be determined, the more so that the destruction and/or abandonment of the pagan sanctuary need not have been necessarily followed immediately by the installation of the church. Actually, the site did not yield any data relevant to the period comprised between the construction of the cella at the beginning of the first century A.D. and that of the church (fifth century?; early sixth century?).

According to the original design, if reflected by the plan of the church at Kursi, the central apse was flanked by rectangular sacristies (*pastophoria*) the width of each of them encompassing the joint width of an aisle and a side wing. A particularly interesting feature is a small doorway connecting the apse with the northern sacristy; its function has not been satisfactorily explained. The chancel was contained within the nave, with a rectangular *bema* probably elevated two steps above the nave floor, like in the Church of Bishop Malechius at Mukawir, Jordan⁷⁶.

The basilica had three doorways in its western wall, leading respectively to the nave and the aisles. Each aisle further had an inner doorway to communicate with the adjoining annexes. Although no earlier mosaic floor was found in the church, the bedding for an earlier floor was tentatively identified in several places at ca 0.10 m below the extant mosaics; this earlier floor corresponded to the top level of the marble pedestals for the columns.

2. The second architectural phase saw the introduction of important changes in the church plan. It seems that both sacristies became reduced in size; the northern one was also cut off from the aisle by a wall, so that a small room (probably a *skeuophylakion* or treasury) was created. It was accessible only through a low and narrow doorway in the wall of the apse, concealed behind a high *synthronon* (consisting of three to four rows of seats) which was constructed inside the main apse. A lateral apse was built at the eastern end of the shortened northern aisle, while the doorway at its western end was

blocked. The *bema* became lower and slightly expanded to the west as well as to the sides, so that its edges abutted two easternmost intercolumniations. It also seems that the atrium achieved its final form during that period, and its porticoes received mosaic floors (with the commemorative inscription for Antona the deaconess). At the same time, the basilica was paved with the extant mosaics, including the inscriptions of two donors (Petros and Hedora) in the southern aisle. This phase is tentatively dated to the last quarter of the sixth century on the grounds of the stylistic similarity between our mosaics, mainly the framing motifs in the northern aisle, and the floors of the baptisteries in Kursi⁷⁷ and at the 'cathedral' at Sussita⁷⁸, paved in A.D. 585 and A.D. 591 respectively. The inscriptions record the names of three members of the local Christian community, among them a female church assistant, clearly representatives of the town elite.

3. During the third phase, which should be dated to an earlier (?) part of the seventh century, the chancel was expanded to embrace the eastern ends of both aisles in a T-shaped manner. This new arrangement necessitated the blocking of the doorway that used to connect the northern aisle with its annexe(s). The chancel screens and posts installed across the two aisles were made of imported marble; there is no doubt, however, that they received their relief decoration in a local (Byzantine Palestinian) workshop. While the limestone base for the chancel screen-and-posts in the northern aisle was placed simply on the top of the mosaic floor⁷⁹, the chancel base of the southern aisle, which consisted of reused blocks of a marble frieze from a monumental Roman building, was inserted deeply into the mosaic floor. Behind the screen, a slightly trapezoidal room on the southern side of the apse served as a *martyrion* chapel. At its rear, a large reliquary of pink limestone with a jewelled (?) cross carved on the face was inserted in the mosaic floor, and a marble altar table was set above it.

4. The fourth phase of the church followed some damage to the building, possibly caused by an earthquake, after which the mosaic pavement in the *martyrion* chapel had to be repaired. Probably also the painted decoration of the *martyrion* walls and the entrance arch was executed at the same time; according to radiocarbon (C^{14}) dating of a wall plaster sample from the entrance to the *martyrion*, this happened after A.D. 690⁸⁰. Unlike the *martyrion*, however, the nave seems to have been left unrepaired.

⁷⁶ Piccirillo 1993, Fig. 418.

⁷⁷ Tzaferis 1983, 28-29, Pls XI: 3 and XII: 4.

⁷⁸ Epstein/Tzaferis 1991, 92-93, Figs 3-5.

⁷⁹ Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2001, Fig. 28.

⁸⁰ Analysis performed by Ms D. Nawrocka of the Institute of Geology, Department of Dynamic and Regional Geology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

A striking contrast noted between the extremely poor state of its preservation (lack of any liturgical equipment; mosaic floor almost entirely destroyed) compared to the fairly good state of the aisles cannot be attributed only to the defensive military activity on the site in the 1950s.

Therefore, it is possible that the nave, damaged and perhaps left without a roof, assumed the functions of an atrium. The atrium itself, used long after its mosaic floor was destroyed and divided into smaller units, apparently served domestic purposes (mainly food processing, perhaps also production of lime?). Domestic use was extended onto the southern tomb in Room 209W, clearly reused as a wine cellar. Actually, one can even presume that the atrium (as well as this particular room) did not belong to the church anymore, as suggested by the presence of a basalt high-backed chair installed at the entrance to the southern aisle, instead of the entrance to the atrium, as one would expect.

The end of this phase is marked by the devastating earthquake of A.D. 749 to which we owe a precious record of the final years in the church's functioning. This is a record of continued worship despite growing pauperisation of the local Christian community. All the marble elements of the church furniture considered unnecessary for liturgy were gradually removed to be burnt into lime, although a lime kiln remains to be located. A layer of pure lime was found in the western end of the northern aisle in association with a marble slab⁸¹. Not far from it, in two different spots, there were the marble supports of an altar once standing above the reliquary in the southern *martyrion*.

The large reliquary inserted into the floor of the *martyrion* chapel had been emptied of its contents to become a sort of pedestal for a portable reliquary made of marble, shaped as a miniature sarcophagus. Judging by a long bronze pin left in the opening of the lid, the latter apparently served to distribute the blessing (*eulogia*) *ex contactu*. The cult of martyr(s) in this place is further emphasized by a complete *polykandelon* of bronze found under a collapsed arch, as well as small votive crosses of silver fixed onto the colonettes crowning the chancel screen⁸².

The northern apse, found filled with marble elements of the church furniture, was probably used for celebrating of the Eucharist during the final days of the church. Contrary to our initial impression that the marbles had been stored here in readiness for burning into lime, we now think that liturgy

continued to be performed here with a superb bronze lamp in the shape of a dove hanging in front of the altar. The marble *mensa* on its four legs was still used as an offering table despite missing a large piece from the slab. A marble reliquary closely similar to that from the southern sacristy and found complete with its contents⁸³ must have been placed on a stone support under the altar.

Finally, the two rooms in the southern wing, accessible from the southern aisle (with a masonry couch for the night guardian opposite the entrance), clearly functioned as a *diakonikon* right from the start. Their contents, sealed by the earthquake, have become the most eloquent testimony to the life of mid-eighth century Christians⁸⁴. The two rooms yielded no less than 104 pottery items. Some of them were unused objects, commissioned for the church (jar lids, terracotta lamps), the others clearly contained offerings brought by the faithful (many cooking pots and casseroles with lids, a few storage jars). They crowded the smaller outer room to the extent that some of them had to be left outside it, against the wall of the aisle⁸⁵. Some elements of church equipment (censer, bell) and iron tools were also kept in the room.

While the outer *diakonikon* room served mainly as a receiving and storing place for the offerings, the precise function of the much larger inner room is open to discussion. Pottery vessels found there, definitely fewer than in the first room, were concentrated in the vicinity of the doorway and along the southern wall. In several places decomposed timber remains were found above the floor, presumably coming from some kind of furniture, perhaps also from ceiling beams. Analysed samples of the timber have been identified as cedar (*Cedrus Libani*) and/or fir (*Abies*)⁸⁶. Actually, the inner *diakonikon* room could have been multi-functional, being used for communal meals, for storing sacred objects and, as recent discoveries seem to indicate, as a baptistery once its eastern part was suitably adapted⁸⁷.

⁸¹ Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2001, 8.

⁸² Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2002, 19, Figs 8 and 35; Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2003, Fig. 44.

⁸³ Segal/Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2001, 3, Figs 47-48.

⁸⁴ Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2003, 29-31; cf. also Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2004.

⁸⁵ Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2001, 11.

⁸⁶ By Ms D. Nawrocka from the Institute of Geology, Poznań.

⁸⁷ Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2004; see also Mlynarczyk/Burdajewicz 2003, 29-31.

To recapitulate, there can be no doubt that the exploration of the North-West Church is crucial to the understanding of the life of Christian communities in the eastern Galilee/south-western Golan on the eve of the Islamic conquest and during Umayyad rule. On the other hand, future fieldwork is expected to bring data on the obscure period during which this famous Dekapolis town changed from pagan to Christian.

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The Iconography of the Wine Drinker in 'Port St Symeon' Ware from the Crusader Era

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While Port St Symeon ware has traditionally been seen as a Crusader ware, an analysis of the pottery indicates that it was produced not only by potters living under the Franks in the Principality of Antioch, but also in the Cilician Kingdom of Armenia. This paper will examine one particular aspect of Port St Symeon ware iconography in order to begin to understand the pottery and to place it within its socio-cultural context. It forms part of a larger study on Port St Symeon ware that I am currently conducting. The majority of Port St Symeon ware decoration is geometric, floral, and, more rarely, figural. The figural iconography includes fantastic beasts (sphinxes, harpies, and griffins), wild and domestic animals (deer, pigs, horses, felines, and oxen), human representations, crosses, and heraldic devices. One of the most popular figural motifs is the representation of the man seated cross-legged drinking wine, usually with the addition of a wine flask. The examination of the banqueting man will not only include a description of the iconography and a comparison with that on other objects of Islamic, Byzantine, Cilician Armenian, and Crusader material culture, but also attempt to reconstruct the reasons why the makers might have decorated their pottery with this particular theme. This will provide information about the connections between workers in the Crusader states in different media: pottery, glass, manuscript illumination, wood carvings, textiles, stone sculpture, and ivory carvings. Finally, it will conclude with a discussion of what this tells us about the cultural influences on the potters who produced Port St Symeon ware and the consumers who used this pottery in terms of display.

PORT ST SYMEON WARE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ITS FORM AND DECORATION

Port St Symeon ware is decorated with sgraffiato decoration; sgraffiato decoration is engraved on pottery in thin and broad lines into the white slip in order to expose the biscuit underneath, usually on

the inside of the pottery. Then the pottery was decorated with yellow-brown (iron-oxide), green (copper oxide) and, more rarely, purple (manganese oxide) glazes that were allowed to run on the vessel. The ware was then glazed with a transparent lead glaze that appeared clear, light yellow, or light green after firing¹. The technique of decorating pottery with sgraffiato and green and yellow-brown glaze that may have imitated metalwork was developed in Mesopotamia and Persia, and there have been suggestions that the ultimate source of Port St Symeon ware was Persian Aghkand sgraffiato pottery². The production of sgraffiato pottery formed part of a wider Mediterranean phenomenon which saw the widespread distribution of different types of fine sgraffiato wares in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries³. Port St Symeon ware had a very limited number of forms; the most characteristic and common form is a shallow bowl with a flat rim⁴.

Port St Symeon ware was first identified by Arthur Lane in his publication of the pottery, glass, and other objects from the excavations that Sir Leonard Woolley conducted in 1936 and 1937 at al-Mina, which is now located in the Hatay province of Turkey⁵. Lane coined the term 'Port

¹ Lane 1938, 46, 47, no. 1; Ševčenko 1974, 357; Atil 1975, no. 30; Frierman 1975, 20; Maguire/Maguire 1992, 4; Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1998, 129.

² Talbot Rice 1965, 228; *idem* 1966, 215; Bornstein/Soucek 1981, no. 13; Maguire/Maguire 1992, 4, 14; Walker 1998, 71.

³ Fehérvári 1973, 68; Grube 1976, 111-112; Vorderstrasse 2004, 244-246.

⁴ Lane 1938, 48, Fig. 8; Talbot Rice 1966, 216; Ševčenko 1974, 357, nos 13, 22; Djoadze 1986, 186; Tonghini 1998, 57; Vorderstrasse 2004, CD-ROM database.

⁵ See Lane 1938, 19-78; Vorderstrasse 2004; Port St Symeon ware pottery was first found in the excavations of Korykos and Merimlik that were conducted by E. Herzfeld and S. Guyer in Cilicia in 1907. For a summary, see Guyer 1930, ix-xiii. It was identified by Volbach as being 'Byzantine', although he did connect it with Cypriot pottery. See Volbach 1930, 197-201.

St Symeon ware' because he believed that the sgraffiato ware had been produced at al-Mina in the thirteenth century (several wasters were found there) and he believed that the name of al-Mina in the Crusader period was Port St Symeon, the principal port of Antioch⁶. As Antioch was the capital of the Crusader principality of Antioch, one would expect that Port St Symeon was one of the most important Crusader ports. There is no evidence, however, from the site of al-Mina that would suggest that this was its name in the Crusader period and the descriptions

of Port St Symeon/Suwaidiya are generally vague⁷. Therefore, it is possible that al-Mina was not Port St Symeon at all and that Lane was incorrect in his assessment.

Not only is the name of the site of al-Mina problematic in the Crusader period, but further evidence has shown that Port St Symeon ware and related types of sgraffiato pottery were also produced at other sites, including those outside of the Principality of Antioch⁸, meaning that it cannot be termed as specifically 'Port St Symeon ware' or even 'Crusader' pottery⁹. Other terms used are 'al-Mina polychrome'¹⁰, 'al-Mina ware'¹¹, 'al Mina or Crusader's ware'¹², 'pottery from the Al Mina workshops'¹³, 'St Symeon Stylites ware'¹⁴, 'another type of sgraffiato pottery'¹⁵, and 'polychrome graffita'¹⁶ respectively. The term, Port St Symeon ware, may not be ideal, but the fact that it has largely been accepted in the literature, means that it is difficult to discontinue its use and using the multitude of other terms, particularly those without the appellation 'al-Mina', can be confusing¹⁷. Therefore, it is preferable to continue to use the term 'Port St Symeon' ware.

In addition to the problems in the name of the pottery and where it was produced, the dating of Port St Symeon ware remains a matter of discussion. Lane argued that the pottery was produced primarily in the early thirteenth century and ended with the Mamluk destruction of al-Mina in 1268. He based this assumption on the Crusader coins found at the site, the majority of which dated to the thirteenth century¹⁸. This date has been largely followed by other scholars¹⁹, and although Lucius dated Port St Symeon bowls simply to the twelfth century²⁰, his hypothesis has not been accepted²¹. It is possible, however, that Port St Symeon ware continued to be produced into the fourteenth century and related wares did continue to be produced in Anatolia in this period²². One can assume that Port St Symeon ware, like other sgraffiato wares in use throughout the Mediterranean, was a tableware intended for private domestic use in dining, although it would be more valuable than undecorated pottery²³.

FIND SPOTS OF PORT ST SYMEON WARE

Port St Symeon ware has a wide distribution throughout different parts of the eastern Mediterranean coast (Fig. 1). Finds of Port St. Symeon or related wares found further inland in eastern Anatolia and Syria

⁶ Lane 1938, 22-23; Vorderstrasse 2004, 232-233.

⁷ Asbridge/Edgington 1999, 141, n. 146; Asbridge 2000, 148, 178; Vorderstrasse 2004, 232-233.

⁸ Waage 1941, 101-102; Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, 358; Walker 1998, 70; von Wartburg 1997a, 338-339; von Wartburg 1997b, 194; Stern 1997, 56 (the petrography of # 96 and 97 shows that they were manufactured at Antioch); Redford 1998, 109-110; Redford et al. 2001, 75, no. 25 (he cites the presence of kiln rods and associated Port St Symeon ware at Epiphaneia and local manufacture at Kinet Höyük); Redford/Blackman, forthcoming. I would like to thank Dr. Scott Redford of Georgetown University for providing me with an advance copy of his article. The article, 'Neutron Activation Analysis of Medieval Ceramics from Kinet, Turkey, Especially Port St Symeon Ware,' will be forthcoming in *Ancient Near Eastern Studies*. Riavez has recently attempted to deny the arguments by Hild and Hellenkemper and von Wartburg that Port St Symeon ware was produced outside of al-Mina, but the discovery of the kiln materials from Kinet Höyük and Epiphaneia add further evidence to the materials from Mopsuetia, that Port St Symeon ware was produced outside of al-Mina.

⁹ Redford/Blackman, forthcoming.

¹⁰ Walker 1998, 57.

¹¹ Frierman 1975, 15; Soucek 1981b, 39.

¹² Flourentzos 1994, 10, 15.

¹³ Djoabadze 1986, 188.

¹⁴ Scott/Kamilli 1981, 605.

¹⁵ Day 1941, 146.

¹⁶ Tonghini 1998, 57.

¹⁷ Vorderstrasse 2004, 246-247.

¹⁸ Lane 1938, 46; Vorderstrasse 2004, 246.

¹⁹ Day 1941, 146; Ševčenko 1974, 356; Pringle 1986, 454; Flourentzos 1994, 15; Avissar 1998, 113; Tonghini 1998, 59, 66; Riavez 2001.

²⁰ Lucius 1966-1968, 122-123.

²¹ Öney 1981, 114; Djoabadze 1986, 190, no. 765. Soucek 1981b, 39-40 dates Port St Symeon ware to the twelfth/thirteenth centuries.

²² Day 1939, 191-193 (her later statements in Day 1941, 146 contradicts this initial suggestion but she does not explain why she changed her mind); Poulsen 1957, 232, 234-235; Scott/Kamilli 1981, 686; Redford 1989, 188 n. 232; François 1995, 97; Waksman 1995, 78-79; Stern 1997, 56; Tonghini 1998, 59-60; Vorderstrasse 2004, 246; Redford/Blackman, forthcoming.

²³ Maguire/Maguire 1992, 19.

will be discussed further elsewhere as they do not contain this motif. The pottery was found in the Cilician Kingdom of Armenia (Anemurium, Tarsus, Korykos, Meriamlik, Mopsuetia, and possibly at Adana²⁴), the Principality of Antioch (Antioch, al-Mina, Kinet Höyük, St Barlaam, and the Monastery of St Symeon Stylite the Younger/Monastery of St John)²⁵, the County of Tripoli and the northern part of the Kingdom of Jerusalem (Tripoli, Beirut)²⁶, the Islamic territories in Syria-Palestine (Hama, Baisan, Jerusalem)²⁷, Kingdom of Jerusalem (Athlit, Caesarea, St Mary in Carmel, Acre, Apollonia-Arsuf, Tell Yoqne'am, Dor, Nazareth)²⁸, Ayyubid/Mamluk Egypt (Alexandria, Fustat)²⁹, the Aegean (Thasos)³⁰, the Kingdom of Cyprus (Nicosia)³¹, but not Italy (Pisa)³². The number of fragments found at any excavated site is generally small; the largest amount of pottery by far has been found at al-Mina, followed distantly by Anemurium. The majority of sites, however, have less than ten sherds, although some of these sites have yet to be fully published.

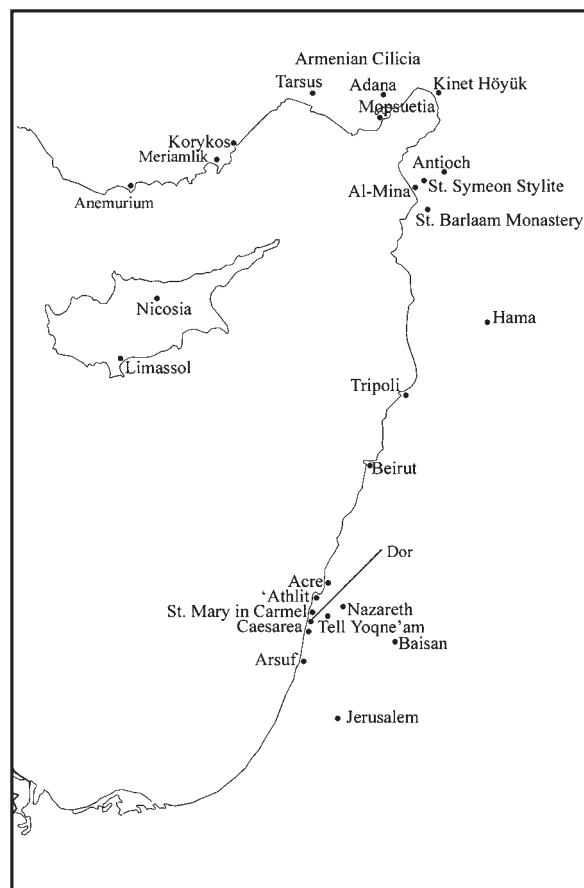


Fig. 1. Map of find spots of St Symeon ware (after Riley-Smith 1995, Map 3)

In addition, Port St Symeon ware has appeared in museums with limited information about their provenance: David Collection³³, Dumbarton Oaks³⁴, Metropolitan Museum of Art³⁵, Düsseldorf (apparently from Cilicia)³⁶, Güven Collection in Istanbul (apparently from Tarsus)³⁷, Istanbul Archaeological Museum³⁸, Victoria and Albert Museum³⁹, Mersin

²⁴ Goldman 1935, 548, Fig. 44; Day 1941, Figs 7-8; Volbach 1930, 197-201; Budde 1969, Figs 5, 23; Tömory 1977, 30, no. 6, 33; Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, 358. Korykos is listed by Pringle as a find spot for Port St Symeon ware in Cilicia, but he ignores Meriamlik. The reason for this omission is due to the fact that Pringle cites Lane 1938 as his source for the information about the presence of Port St Symeon ware in Korykos. Lane 1938, 52 in his turn, cites Volbach 1930 but states that Port St Symeon ware was "included among the fragments from Korykos and elsewhere in Cilicia. found in Korykos and elsewhere in Cilicia." If Pringle had consulted Volbach he would have discovered that this ware was found at both sites. In the case of Tarsus, Pringle also cites Lane 1938 and did not consult the two publications (one of which had not appeared when Lane wrote) Goldman 1935 and Day 1941.

²⁵ Lane 1938, 45-54, Fig. 8, Pls XXI.1-2, XXII.1A-F, 2, XXIII, XXIV, XXV.2-4, XXVI.1, XXVII.H-I, K-L; Waagé 1948, 96, 102, Figs 71-73, 92.8; Djobadze 1986, 191-198; Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, Abb. 312-315; Redford et al. 2001, 70-71, Figs 14-21, 23.3, 24; Vorderstrasse 2004, 247-249, CD-ROM database. It should be noted that Kinet Höyük was on the border between Cilician Armenia and the Principality of Antioch and may have been controlled by the Knights Templar. See Redford et al. 2001, 59 and Redford and Blackman, forthcoming.

²⁶ Salamé-Sarkis 1980, 166-168, Figs 9-11, Pls XLIII-XLVI; el-Masri 1997, 103-119, Fig. 1.4.

²⁷ Poulsen 1957, 234-235; Virgilio/Corbo 1965, Figs 112.14-16; Zori 1966, 127, Pl. 10F.

²⁸ Johns 1933, 137-144; Roll/Ayalon 1982, 21; Bagatti 1984, Tav. 72 N. 1-3, 12, 17; Pringle 1984, 106; Pringle 1985; Pringle 1986, 458-459; Avissar 1996, 113; Pringle 1997, No. 65; Stern 1997, 56; Arnon 1999, 227. The excavations of Dor have not been published, but a color photo of one bowl appears in Stern 1999, 259, Fig. 1 and in Rosenthal-Heginbottom 2000, 61 (a color photo also appears on the cover of the issue).

²⁹ Lane 1949, 145-147; Kubiak 1968, 12; *idem* 1970, 114, 116, 118, 120-123; *idem* 1998; François 1998, 324.

³⁰ François 1993, 317-320, 321 n. 13.

³¹ Flourentzos 1994, 15; von Wartburg 1997, 338-339.

³² Lane 1938, Pl. XXVI.2. This piece is incorrectly identified as Port St Symeon ware.

³³ von Folsach 2001, #190, Blackman/Redford, forthcoming.

³⁴ Ševčenko 1974, 353-356, Figs 1-12.

³⁵ Maguire 1997, 401.

³⁶ Ševčenko 1974, Fig. 21.

³⁷ Lucius 1966-1968, 122-123.

³⁸ Işin 2001, 82.

³⁹ Lane 1938, Pl. XXVI.3; Frierman 1975, no. 111 (color picture on cover).

Museum⁴⁰, Limassol Medieval Museum⁴¹, Mrs O. Raouf Collection in Nicosia⁴², and more remain unpublished in the Antakya Museum⁴³. There are probably other unpublished pieces in the Adana Museum and other museums in Cilicia in Turkey and also in Syria.

PORT ST SYMEON WARE DECORATION

The majority of Port St Symeon ware preserved are decorated with geometric and floral decoration while a smaller group are decorated with crosses, heraldry, animals (both fantastic and natural) and

human figures⁴⁴. There have been suggestions that Port St Symeon ware was 'Armenian'⁴⁵, 'Seljuk'⁴⁶, or 'Crusader'⁴⁷, but it is difficult to call Port St Symeon by any specific cultural term⁴⁸. Rather, one may speak of various influences on a type of pottery that was produced in the Principality of Antioch and Cilician Armenia. One might more accurately call the pottery 'Northeast Mediterranean'. The inspiration for pottery forms is primarily from Islamic art, but the overall decoration of these table wares clearly reflected the cultural plurality of the region⁴⁹. This article will focus on one particular type of figural iconography, that of a seated man holding a goblet, in order to explore some of these cultural influences.

DEPICTION OF A SEATED MAN HOLDING A GOBLET IN PORT ST SYMEON WARE

One of the most popular figural motifs of Port St Symeon ware (second only in number to bowls decorated with birds) is the seated man holding a goblet. This scene of courtly life depicting a cross-legged sitting man drinking from a wine glass (sometimes in company of others in a banqueting scene) is one that is extremely popular in Islamic art⁵⁰ and also appears in art from Cilician Armenia, Greater Armenia, and Sicily⁵¹. It was apparently inspired by Sasanian art that depicted rulers hunting and drinking⁵², and became popular in Islamic art during the Abbasid period⁵³. The popularity of the seated man with a wine goblet can be seen by its presence in manuscript illuminations, ceramics, metalwork, and wall paintings in Islamic, Chersonese, and Armenian art that will be discussed below. Interestingly, it is not a common motif in art of the Crusader lands outside of Port St Symeon ware.

Eight complete or nearly complete examples of the seated man drinking in Port St Symeon ware exist, in addition to several more fragments. All are bowls: one from the al-Mina excavations (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum; Pl. 1)⁵⁴, one from a test trench in Monastery of St John, near St Symeon Stylite the Younger (now in the Antakya Museum; Fig. 2)⁵⁵, two from the Hama excavations (now in the Damascus Museum and Copenhagen Museum respectively; Figs 3, 4)⁵⁶, one from the Mopsuetia excavations (now in the Misis Mosaic Museum, Fig. 5)⁵⁷, one apparently from Tarsus (now in the possession of Dr. Güven in Istanbul;

⁴⁰ Süslü 1989, 98, Res. 147. This plate was allegedly found in Adana. I would like to thank Demet Varli for her assistance in reading the Turkish text.

⁴¹ Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1998, no. 90.

⁴² Du Plat Taylor/Megaw 1937-1939, 8, Pl. IV.5; Pringle 1986, no. 39 (he does not mention the fact that this piece came from a private collection rather than from excavations); Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1998, no. 90. LMRR 162/2 LM 1806.

⁴³ Djobadze 1986, no. 747. Djobadze mentions numerous unpublished tablewares now in Hatay Museum that were not found in archaeological excavations.

⁴⁴ Lane 1938, 49-50. See Vorderstrasse 2004, particularly CD-ROM database.

⁴⁵ Zakarian 1996, 95.

⁴⁶ Öney 1971, 115; Öney 1981, 117.

⁴⁷ Pringle 1986, 458.

⁴⁸ Redford 2004, 282.

⁴⁹ Lane 1938, 49-52; Woolley 1953, 170; Ševčenko 1974, 360; Soucek 1981, 15-16; Djobadze 1986, 188-189, 191; François 1995, 97; Stern 1997, 56; Boas 1998, 162; Kubiak 1998, 340; Walker 1998, 26-28, 72, 87; Vorderstrasse 2004, 247.

⁵⁰ Gelfer-Jørgensen 1986, 29; Baer 1989, 30; Walker 1998, 71; Redford 2004, 302-303.

⁵¹ Ettinghausen 1962, Pl. 45; Talbot Rice 1971, Fig. 11b; Djobadze 1986, 189; Gelfer-Jørgensen 1986, 29.

⁵² Pope 1938a, Pl. 208A. This Sasanian silver plate shows cross-legged drinking man; Lucius 1966-1968, 128; Djobadze 1986, 189; Irwin 1997, 24.

⁵³ Gelfer-Jørgensen 1986, 29.

⁵⁴ Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. C295.1937; Lane 1938, 50-51; Öney 1971, Fig. 47; Frierman 1975, no. 106; Süslü 1989, 98, Res. 148 (incorrectly states it is from the Antakya Museum); Vorderstrasse 2004, Fig. 40 and CD-ROM.

⁵⁵ Inv. no. IV 50 J; Djobadze 1986, 196.

⁵⁶ Poulsen 1957, 234, nos 804-805, Pl. 5; Ševčenko 1974, Fig. 16; Djobadze 1986, 189, Fig. 377.

⁵⁷ Budde 1969, Abb.5 (color drawing); Süslü 1989, 96-97, Res. 145 (color photo); Işin 2001, 45 (color photo). A color photo of this bowl is also available on the official webpage of the Misis Mosaic Museum: www.kultur.gov.tr/portal/arkeoloji_en.asp?belgeno=2937.

Fig. 6)⁵⁸, and one apparently from Adana (now in the Mersin Museum; Fig. 7)⁵⁹. In addition to these bowls, a similar bowl was apparently found at the Mersin excavations⁶⁰, but unfortunately a photo was never published and it cannot be studied. In addition to these pieces, several fragments have also been found at al-Mina (Pl. 2)⁶¹, Mopsuetia (Figs 8-11)⁶², Acre (Fig. 12)⁶³, 'Athlit (Fig. 13)⁶⁴, Fustat (Fig. 14)⁶⁵, and Kinet Höyük (Fig. 15)⁶⁶. There is also a fragment from the Louvre that shows a figure drinking from a footed goblet and a wearing a turban with a long trailing fabric or a veil (Fig. 16)⁶⁷. This fragment may be related to Port St Symeon ware but it needs to be investigated further.

The pieces all have certain similarities to each other: they depict a cross-legged sitting nobleman holding a wineglass wearing an upper garment with tiraz bands on the upper sleeves or fragments thereof. Tiraz bands decorated clothes for men and women in the Islamic world that were decorated with inscriptions or other motifs that were embroidered, painted, or printed⁶⁸. A Port St Symeon ware fragment from Metropolitan Museum of Art depicting a horse and rider also has similar tiraz bands on the horseman's clothes⁶⁹. Four of the figures (al-Mina bowl, Hama bowl in the Damascus Museum, Monastery of St John bowl, and 'Athlit fragment) depict the figure wearing a turban, while the figures on the Hama bowl in Copenhagen Museum and the Güven Collection bowl wear a three-lobed crown. The figure on the Mersin Museum bowl wears a crown with many points and the figures on the bowl and one fragment from Mopsuetia are bare-headed (Fig. 10)⁷⁰.

When enough of the figures have been preserved, almost all show a seated man holding a wine glass in his right hand and a wine bottle on the left side of the figure. There are two exceptions to this pattern. The first is the bowl from the Mersin Museum where the figure holds the wine glass in his left hand with a wine pitcher on his right side. The second is a fragment from Mopsuetia that depicts the figure holding a wine bottle in his right hand (the top has been broken off) sitting in front of a table/shelf with a bowl in the middle and two goblets on either side (Fig. 8)⁷¹. Further, what is in the left hand of all the figures differs. One figure, that from the Mopsuetia bowl, holds an object in his left hand that can be interpreted as a depiction of a *mandil* (towel; Fig. 5). The figures from al-Mina, Acre, Mopsuetia (Fig. 8)⁷², and Kinet Hüyük

hold nothing in their left hand while the figures from the Güven Collection, Mopsuetia⁷³ and the Hama bowl in Copenhagen hold a round object in their hand that has been interpreted as a pomegranate; the figure from the Adana Museum and Mopsuetia holds a similar round object (Fig. 9). Several figures of Port St Symeon ware are holding circular objects which have been interpreted as being a pomegranate. Similar objects held by figures are seen in Seljuk stone reliefs⁷⁴ and tiles⁷⁵, Iranian stucco⁷⁶, and a fourteenth-century Armenian manuscript⁷⁷. The pomegranate is said to be the symbol of eternity, fertility⁷⁸, plenty, and paradise⁷⁹.

Now that the pieces themselves have been examined, it remains to see what sort of influences might have affected Port St Symeon ware decoration of a banqueting man. As has already been noted, figures sitting cross-legged (sometimes with a wine glass in hand) are found commonly in Islamic art. It appears in Egyptian Fatimid wall paintings of the

⁵⁸ Lucius 1966-1968, 122-123, Fig. 1a; Öney. 1971, Fig. 48; *idem* 1981, 114; Djobadze 1986, 190.

⁵⁹ This bowl was initially mentioned in passing by Öney 1981, 114, but no photos were published. The piece was published by Süslü 1989, 98, Res. 147.

⁶⁰ Garstang 1953, 261.

⁶¹ Inv. no. C318.1937; Lane 1938, Pl. XXII.1E; Vorderstrasse 2004, CD-ROM catalogue. Lane also suggests that the fragment published on Pl. XXII.1F (C318A.1937) was similar. See Lane 1938, 50 and Ševčenko 1974, no. 18. Very little of this fragment was preserved, however, and it appears to depict a hand holding a pole and therefore seems to have little relation to the pieces under discussion here.

⁶² Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, Abb. 313, center and bottom photos, Abb. 315, top right photo.

⁶³ Stern 1997, no. 96.

⁶⁴ Riavez 2001, Tav. 15.10.

⁶⁵ Kubiak 1970, Fig. 3, top left; *idem* 1998, Fig. 15, center.

⁶⁶ Redford et al. 2001, Fig. 15.2.

⁶⁷ Inv. no. MAO 1253-2-38; Makariou 2001, 38.

⁶⁸ Talbot Rice 1969, 268; Contadini 1998, 39; Stillman/Sanders 2000, 534, 537; Makariou 2001, 34-35.

⁶⁹ Maguire 1997, no. 268.

⁷⁰ Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, Abb. 313, bottom right.

⁷¹ Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, Abb. 313, center.

⁷² Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, Abb. 313, center.

⁷³ Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, Abb. 313, bottom right.

⁷⁴ Öney/Erginsoy 1992, Fig. 24.

⁷⁵ Işin 2001, 43.

⁷⁶ Pope 1938b, Pl. 517.

⁷⁷ Der Nersessian 1993: #623. Erevan Matendaran 2627. Fol. 210v.

⁷⁸ Öney/Erginsoy 1992, 234.

⁷⁹ Catalogue Istanbul 1983.



Fig. 2. Bowl from the Monastery of St John
(after Djobadze 1986, Pl. LXIV)



Fig. 6. Bowl from Güven Collection
(after Lucius 1966-68, Fig. 1a)



Fig. 3. Bowl from Hama, Copenhagen Museum
(after Sevchenko 1974, Fig. 16)



Fig. 7. Bowl from Mersin Museum
(after Süslü 1989, Res. 147)



Fig. 4. Hanan Bowl; Damascus Museum
(after Poulsen 1957, Pl. 5)



Fig. 8. Fragment from Mopsuetia
(after Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, Abb. 313, center)



Fig. 5. Bowl from Mopsuetia (after Budde 1969, Abb. 5)



Fig. 9. Fragment from Mopsuetia
(after Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, Abb. 3, bottom left)

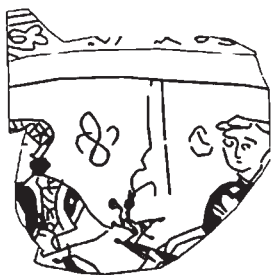


Fig. 10. Fragment from Mopsuetia
(after Hild/Hellenkemper 1990,
Abb. 3, bottom right)

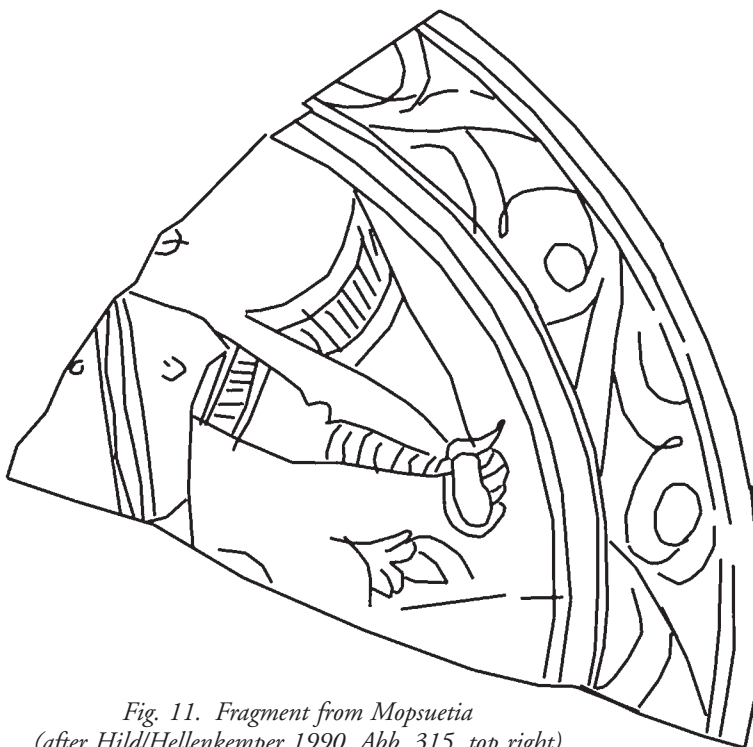


Fig. 11. Fragment from Mopsuetia
(after Hild/Hellenkemper 1990, Abb. 315, top right)



Fig. 12. Fragment from Acre
(after Stern 1997, no. 96)

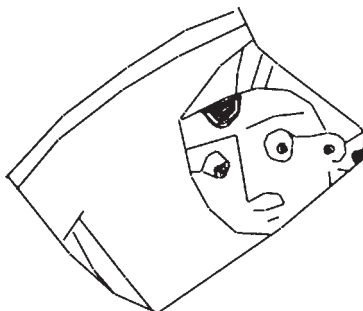


Fig. 13. Fragment from 'Athlit
(after Riavez 1990, Tav. 15.10)



Fig. 16. Fragment in Louvre
Museum (after Makariou 2001, 38)

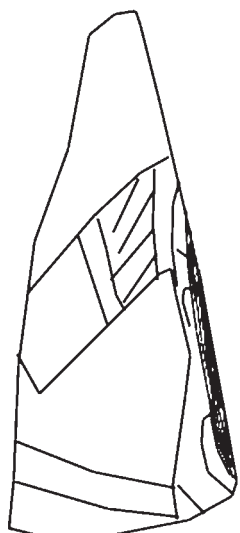


Fig. 14. Fragment from Fustat
(after Kubiak 1970, Fig. 3, top left)

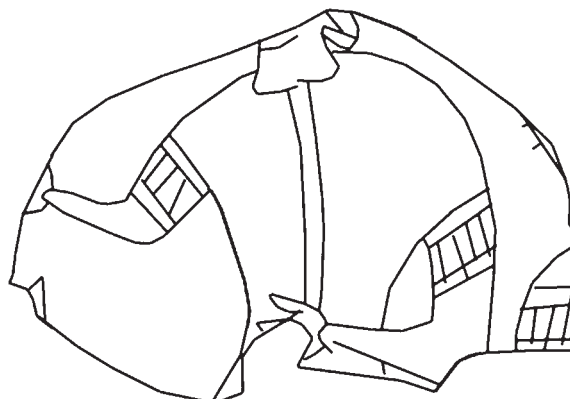
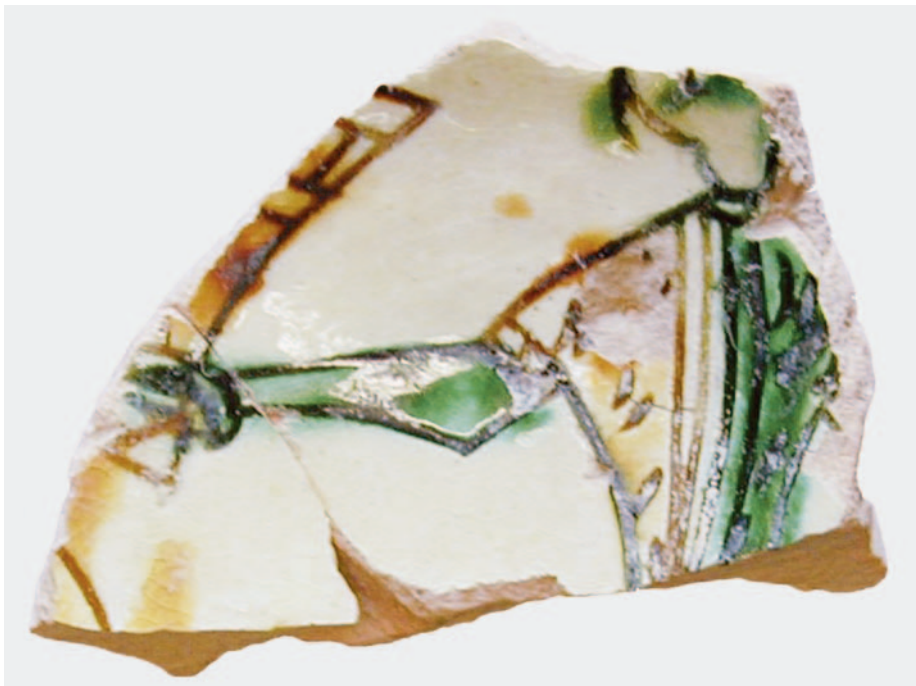


Fig. 15. Fragment from Kinet Höyük
(after Redford et al. 2001, Fig. 15.2)



Pl. 1. Bowl from al-Mina; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. C295.1937, al-Mina (photo author)



Pl. 2. Bowl fragment from al-Mina; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. C318.1937, al-Mina (photo author)

tenth/eleventh century showing a figure holding a goblet⁸⁰, eleventh-century Fatimid lustreware⁸¹ (one where the figure holds a glass in one hand and has an ewer at his side⁸² and cross-legged figure holding a beaker in each hand⁸³), twelfth-century Iranian stucco⁸⁴ and metalwork⁸⁵, Seljuk stone reliefs⁸⁶, metalwork⁸⁷, tiles⁸⁸, sgraffiato pottery⁸⁹, and manuscripts⁹⁰, Syrian faience bowl⁹¹, twelfth/thirteenth-century clay medallion⁹², Persian lustre-ware⁹³, Mesopotamian manuscripts of twelfth/thirteenth centuries⁹⁴, Egyptian/Syrian metalwork⁹⁵, Syrian enamelled glass⁹⁶ underglaze pottery⁹⁷, and illuminated manuscripts⁹⁸. Greater Armenian and Cilician Armenian illuminated manuscripts show both men and women sitting cross-legged⁹⁹, clearly influenced by Islamic art. In addition, one can see a similar figure in Chersonese pottery¹⁰⁰. The fact that Spanish¹⁰¹ and Byzantine manuscripts¹⁰² depict Muslims cross-legged indicates that it was considered a typical Muslim motif.

Despite its widespread popularity in Armenian and particularly in Islamic art, the motif of cross-legged sitting man drinking from a goblet is largely not seen in Frankish art other than in Port St Symeon ware. It does, however, appear twice in a late thirteenth-century Crusader manuscript from Acre. One illumination shows Holofernes sitting cross-legged and the other depicts seven sitting cross-legged men, six playing musical instruments and one with a wine glass.¹⁰³ This is the only time, as far as I have been able to determine, that this motif appears in Crusader manuscript illuminations. Islamic objects were wanted in Europe¹⁰⁴ and therefore it is not surprising that Islamic motifs would have been popular amongst Frankish artists and patrons. What is perhaps interesting, is that this particular motif, which seems so popular in the lands surrounding the Principality of Antioch, does not actually appear more often in Frankish art. The presence of such an Islamic motif may have something to do with the producers of Port St Symeon ware. One piece of pottery from the Crusader period depicts a bird with an Arabic inscription found at al-Mina (C317G.1937), which indicates that it was made by local Syrians¹⁰⁵.

The depiction of banqueting of Port St Symeon ware is reflective of the general depictions of banqueting in Islamic manuscripts that show individuals sitting around tables cross-legged on the floor drinking wine¹⁰⁶ and in Armenian manuscripts showing individuals holding cups that are full of red

liquid, also undoubtedly wine¹⁰⁷. Despite the Islamic dietary restrictions and some caliphs' attempts to curb wine consumption, wine remained an important part of life¹⁰⁸. The Franks followed the Islamic custom of sitting on rugs or mats and at low tables and, not surprisingly, wine drinking was also

⁸⁰ Gelfer-Jørgensen 1986, Fig. 7; Talbot Rice 1971, Fig. 11a, 38E; Cruikshank Dodd 1997, 270, Fig. 17.

⁸¹ Catalogue 1966, no. 76; Otto-Dorn 1969b, Fig. 2.

⁸² Farès 1952, Pl. IX.

⁸³ Denny/Ezzy/Watson 1976, Pl. 276.

⁸⁴ Pope 1938b, Pl. 517.

⁸⁵ Pope 1939, Pl. 1335; Melikian-Chirvani 1982, Fig. 15A; Catalogue Paris 2001a: #58 Louvre Inv. OA5548.

⁸⁶ Öney/Erginsoy 1992, Fig. 24.

⁸⁷ Von Folsach 2001, #501; Işin 2001, 102.

⁸⁸ Otto-Dorn 1969b, Figs 1, 8-9; Öney 1971, 114; Süslü 1989, Pl. 107, 135; Öney/Erginsoy 1992, Figs 72-73.

⁸⁹ Otto-Dorn 1969, no. 105.

⁹⁰ Talbot Rice 1971: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts; Öney/Erginsoy 1992, Figs 126-127, 129, Library of Topkapi Museum, Ahmet III, 3472, Pls 11b, 88b, 133a.

⁹¹ Catalogue Berlin 1995, no. 89.

⁹² Catalogue Berlin 1995, no. 91.

⁹³ Watson 1985, no. 15.

⁹⁴ Blochet 1926, ms. Arabe 5847, Fol. v; Buchthal 1939, Pl. XXIII. BM Museum Ms. Add. 7170. fol. 145; Jerphanion 1940, fol. 57v; Roux 1982, Figs 7-8, 11; Catalogue Paris 2001b, no. 90. Mosul lectionary fol. 57v.

⁹⁵ Hillenbrand 1995, 458, Fig. 1.9.

⁹⁶ Sievernich/Budde 1989, Abb. 661; Carboni 2001, cat. 86-87, 96.

⁹⁷ Atil 1975, no. 30.

⁹⁸ Grabar 1984: Grabar illustrates many examples in the microfiche.

⁹⁹ Macler 1928, Fig. 1. Saint-Lazaire 424, Life of Alexander; Guevorkian 1982, #2, ms. 2556, 1356 Evangile; Zakarian 1984, Cod. 212 Fol. 246r; Der Nersessian 1993, #612. Erevan. 1320. Fol. 171, Fol. 34, #623. Erevan Matendaran 2627. Fol. 210v; Traina et alii 2003, Fol. 46v, 106r.

¹⁰⁰ Talbot Rice 1965, Fig. 21; Öney 1971, Fig. 43.

¹⁰¹ Riley-Smith 1995, 243.

¹⁰² Estopañan 1965, fol. 97a, fol. 113va, 149vb.

¹⁰³ Buchthal 1957, 85-86, Histoire Universelle London BL Add. 15268 Fols. 1v and 181r.

¹⁰⁴ See the extensive list of these objects in Shalem 1998.

¹⁰⁵ Lane 1938, 49l, 78, no.6, Pl. XXII.1D; Djobadze 1986, 191; Vorderstrasse 2004, 249, Fig. 71. See CD-ROM database for color photo.

¹⁰⁶ Farès 1952, Pl. XII. Paris BN arabe 3929 folio 149 recto; Talbot Rice 1971, Ambrosian Library Milan A.125 Inf.; Guthrie 1995, 187; Öney/Erginsoy 1992, Figs 126-127, 129, p. 88b, 11b, 133a. Library of Topkapi Museum, Ahmet III, 3472.

¹⁰⁷ Mathews and Taylor 2001, 496; Traina et alii 2003: Fol. 31r.

¹⁰⁸ al-Mas'ūdi 1989, 299; Mez 1937, 397-298, 400; van Gelder 2000, 16, 23-24; Guthrie 1995, 184-186.

popular¹⁰⁹. Therefore, the motif of the drinking man on Port St Symeon ware would have been popular amongst individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds and the motif has been found at sites under Cilician Armenia, Frankish, and Islamic control. It is ironic that the wine drinking depicted on these lead glazed pottery could not have been imitated in real life using the pottery upon which it is depicted. The lead glaze on Port St Symeon ware was poisonous if it came into contact with acids including those in wine, fruit juices, or vinegar¹¹⁰.

The wine-drinking accoutrements: glasses, bottles, and, in one instance, a *mandīl*, are found commonly depicted in Islamic and Armenian art. The goblets tend to be of similar shape to those depicted in Port St Symeon ware and these are paralleled in the archaeological record. Goblets, made of glass, and usually enameled, are found in numerous museum collections and at the Hama and al-Mina excavations¹¹¹. In addition, goblets are also found depicted on fourteenth-century Cypriot sgraffiato pottery, although the figures holding the glasses are standing rather than sitting cross-legged. The goblets are much larger than most of those depicted on Port St Symeon ware and elsewhere in Islamic and Armenian art¹¹². The size and general shape of the glasses from Cypriot pottery does closely resemble goblets in the Mopsuetia (Fig. 11) and

al-Mina fragments (Pl. 2). The fact that these goblets are so common and the fact that goblets in manuscripts are depicted as clear and filled with red wine, indicates that they were made out of glass. Bottles that parallel those found on the bowls, also enameled and made of glass, are found in a number of museum collections¹¹³.

The figure on the bowl from Mopsuetia is holding an object in his left hand that I believe is a fringed towel or napkin, known as a *mandīl* (plural *manādīl*). This is based on examining depictions of *manādīl* from banqueting scenes in Islamic and Armenian art. A *mandīl* (from Latin/Greek *mantel* -e, -um, -ium) was a general term for kerchief/towel that is used for various purposes, but small *manādīl* were used at dinner and drinking parties. The *manādīl* were used to dry hands, fingers, and mouth after eating and drinking. The ideal towel is supposed to be fluffy and in pictorial depictions they are usually rendered as white in color and often have a decorative border and could have a fringe. The *mandīl* was usually held in the drinker's left hand and served for wiping his mouth, as the left hand was not be used for eating and drinking. It was held in characteristic fashion, folded double with the hand closer to the loop that was formed than to the ends of the *mandīl*. The *manādīl* had various names, including one that indicates that it was used especially for wine¹¹⁴.

Manādīl are commonly depicted both in Islamic and Armenian art, showing the drinker holding a cup in one hand and a *mandīl* in the other. The slave girl automaton described by al-Jazari in the late twelfth century, provides a good description of how the *mandīl* would have been used in banqueting. The slave girl appears from the cupboard with glass and small *mandīl*; the one meter tall slave girl hands a glass to the drinker and then the towel was used to wipe the mouth¹¹⁵. A similar scene can be seen in Armenian manuscripts¹¹⁶, and cross-legged figures are frequently depicted holding *manādīl* in both Cilician Armenian and Greater Armenian illuminations¹¹⁷. Napkins or handkerchiefs are also depicted on Cypriot sgraffiato bowls¹¹⁸, but it is not clear if these were used in the same way in Cypriot dining. As the *manādīl* were also apparently used in dining amongst the Frankish populations in Syria-Palestine¹¹⁹, it is probable they had a similar function in Cyprus. The *mandīl* seen on the bowl from Mopsuetia is held in the correct hand in the correct way and had a fringe on it (Fig. 5).

¹⁰⁹ Holmes 1977, 12, 17, 25.

¹¹⁰ Frierman 1975, 20.

¹¹¹ Lane 1938, 50; Kenesson 1998, 45-48; Carboni 2001, cat. 85; Carboni/Whitehouse 2001, Figs 99 and 128; Catalogue Paris 2001b, nos 57, 204-205; Vorderstrasse 2004, 257-260 and CD-ROM.

¹¹² Flourentzos 1994, nos 27-28; Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1998, no. 75.

¹¹³ Carboni 2001, cat. 101; Carboni/Whitehouse 2001, Figs 101, 121, 126; Catalogue Paris 2001b, 29, no. 206.

¹¹⁴ Ahsan 1979, 46, 162; Rosenthal 1971, 63, 66 (no. 1), 67, 69 (no. 5); Rosenthal 1991, 402-403; Guthrie 1995, 182, 184-186, Pl. 18 (Bibliothèque Nationale 5847).

¹¹⁵ Rosenthal 1971, Pl. 7; Hill 1974, Ch. 10 of Category II. Section 1. Illustrated in Kraus. NY 1315 ms. and in Fogg Art museum 1354 ms. showing a slave girl automaton holding a cup and fringed *mandīl*; Atil 1975, no. 47.

¹¹⁶ Traina et alii 2003, Fol. 116v.

¹¹⁷ Guevorkian 1982, #2, Jerusalem ms. 2556, 1356 Evangile; #9, Erevan Ms. 6288, 86, Evangelaire 1211; Der Nersessian 1993, #623. Erevan Matendaran 2627. Fol. 210v; Mathews/Taylor 2001, 146.

¹¹⁸ Flourentzos 1994, no. 28; Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1989, no. 18; Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1998, no. 76.

¹¹⁹ Holmes 1977, 12.

Despite the fact that it is seen only in one found in Port St Symeon ware, it is a typical scene in other forms of art.

CONCLUSION

Although it has traditionally been seen as a 'Crusader' type of pottery, the evidence is clear that it was a north Syrian and Cilician type that was produced under the Franks and the Cilician Armenians. This study has shown that despite the fact that it was produced in the Principality of Antioch, the iconography bears close resemblance to Islamic models. The limited evidence for pottery production of Port St Symeon ware indicates that it was made by local Syrian individuals in the region, but its presence throughout the Crusader states, Cilician Armenia, Kingdom of Cyprus, and Islamic lands shows that this motif was also popular with consumers of various religions and ethnicities. The widespread use of the motif may explain why this is one of the most popular figural motifs in Port St Symeon ware. It should not be forgotten, however, that Port St Symeon ware is primarily a ware with geometric and floral motifs and figural motifs, such as the one studied above, remain rare but are all very similar to each other. Stylistically, some of the pieces are related but the presence of variations within this motif point to the fact that it was made by a number of different individuals and was not the product of a single pottery workshop. This fits into our understanding of Port St Symeon ware, which had multiple workshops and was produced throughout the Principality of Antioch and the Cilician Kingdom of Armenia.

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Preface

To Christians, Jerusalem has always been the pilgrim's major destination and visitors to the holy places in Palestine never returned home with empty hands. In the late Ottoman period, icon workshops in Jerusalem produced not only much appreciated icons, but also a typical topographic representation of the Holy Land, called *proskynetarion*. Such 'maps', provided with the images of holy sites, biblical themes and images of saints, were purchased by pilgrims and brought to their homeland, where these souvenirs ended up in private collections, churches and museums.

Until recently, these remarkable objects and their socio-historical context have escaped the attention of scholars. In October 2003, the first conference dedicated to *proskynetaria* was held in Warsaw¹, on which occasion it was suggested that a second meeting of specialists should be organised in the Netherlands. This symposium, called 'Proskynetaria: 'Pilgrim's Souvenirs from the Holy Land (18th-19th Century)', took place in Hernen Castle near Nijmegen, the Netherlands, on September 11, 2004. Simultaneously, a photo-exhibition on *proskynetaria*, their predecessors and icon-production in Palestine was held in Hernen Castle, with the nineteenth-century specimen preserved in the castle as the focal piece. It was the first time this was shown to the public.

During the symposium, papers were presented by Krijnie Ciggaar (Leiden); Mat Immerzeel (Leiden); Magdalena Łaptaś (Warsaw); Otto Meinardus (Ellerau); Martine Meuwese (Cambridge); Yuri Piatnitsky (St Petersburg); Zuzana Skalova (Cairo); and Herman Teule (Nijmegen). The subjects covered

a wide field of research, such as the production of icons and souvenirs in medieval Jerusalem, the image of the Holy City in Western medieval illuminations, pilgrimages to the Holy City, the production and the iconography of *proskynetaria* and the late-Ottoman art and souvenir industry in Palestine. To facilitate smooth publication of the contributions, it was decided to include them in the present volume of *Eastern Christian Art*.

The editorial board is much indebted to Victoria van Aalst, who, together with Mat Immerzeel, organized this symposium and assisted with the preparatory work on the publication as guest editor, as well as to Ania Lentz, who corrected the English of the papers.

The symposium was organized by the A.A. Bredius Foundation in Hernen and the Paul van Moorsel Centre for Christian Art and Culture in the Middle East (Leiden University). Financial support was provided by the Research Council for the Humanities of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the project 'The formation of a communal identity among West Syrian Christians (451-1300)' of Leiden University (Faculties of Art and Theology) and the Socrates/Erasmus Programme of the European Community.

Mat IMMERZEEL

¹ The proceedings of this congress are published in *Series Byzantina* 2 (2004).

Notes on Seventeenth to Nineteenth-Century Pilgrimages to the Holy Land

Otto F.A. MEINARDUS (†)

In the final days of the year A.D. 1516, Mameluke domination over the Holy Land ended with the conquest by the Ottoman Turks. The victorious Sultan Selim I (1512-1520) made a ceremonial entry into Jerusalem and for the following 400 years the land was dominated and administered by Turkish officers as governors of its five districts. However, the most constructive impact was exerted by Selim's son, Sulaiman the Magnificent, who reigned from 1520 to 1566. His most notable accomplishments can still be seen in the Jerusalem of today. He restored the ramparts of the Old City and left the walls virtually unchanged. Today's Damascus Gate is Sulaiman's structure, also the decorative adornments to the Haram ash-Sharif. He erected public fountains in the city, restored dams and improved the water supply.

During the Ottoman reign, Christian pilgrims from the East and the West continued to visit the Holy Land and the established poll-tax, introduced by the Mamelukes, was retained. At the same time, Christian pilgrims were left free to practice their individual religious rites, though the laws directing the behaviour of pilgrims were still in force. While these 'guidelines' originated in the late fifteenth century, they were still considered important for ensuring a trouble free pilgrimage. Some of the 27 'articles' issued by the Franciscan guardian provide the necessary 'etiquette' expected of all occidental visitors. Thus, for example, no pilgrim should wander alone around the holy places without a Saracen guide. Should a pilgrim be struck, however unjustly, he must not return the blow. Pilgrims should not chip fragments off the Holy Sepulchre or other holy sites. Moreover, they should not deface the walls or columns in the churches by scratching their names or coats-of-arms thereon. And, of course, they should not laugh as they walk through the streets of Jerusalem, but rather be grave and devout, so as not to annoy the Saracen men and women. For many obvious reasons, they

should not accept invitations by the local women, nor should they offer wine to the local population. They should be very careful about their property and never leave it lying about. Pilgrims should beware of entering mosques, for if found therein, they would not escape unharmed. And lastly, pilgrims were to show respect to the poor Franciscan brethren of Mount Zion in Jerusalem, by whose help they were conducted in and out of the Holy Land.

Except for the five years of Muhammad Pasha's governorship from 1620-1625, towards the end of the sixteenth century and following the death of Sulaiman, Ottoman rule in Palestine was marked by neglect and corruption, which also had their inevitable effect on the pilgrimages, both from the East and the West. Rather than uniting in the face of common adversary, the various Christian communities in the Holy Land instead sharpened their various religious rivalries about certain properties and celebration rights in the holy places. Each community tried to increase its political influence and extend its rights and privileges at the expense of the other. The most powerful contenders were the Latins, represented by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, and the Greek Orthodox hierarchy, the latter seeking to recover some of the ground lost to the Latins during the Crusader period. In general, the Greeks, Armenians and other Eastern Orthodox Christians were more successful in their endeavours, as they possessed more political and economic influence among the officials at the Sublime Porte in Constantinople.

By the seventeenth century, most Western pilgrims were intrigued, puzzled and perplexed by the various Christian rites in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and therefore listed the various Christian communities they had noticed in the church. They agreed on the following groups: there were the Latins, represented by the Franciscan fathers; the Greeks, the Armenians and the Egyptian Copts, also

known as the Christians of the Girdle; then there were the Ethiopians, the Syrians or Jacobites, the Georgians, the Nestorians or Assyrians, and the Maronites. By the sixteenth century the Nubians were one of the first Christian communities who were unable to pay the 'church-taxes' to the Turks. They were therefore forced to surrender their altar of Adam's skull below Golgotha to the wealthier and more powerful Greeks.

Some other communities followed their example, until, by the eighteenth century, only the Latins, Greeks, Armenians, Copts and Syrians were represented in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Ethiopians having been assigned to the roof of the Armenian Chapel of St Helena, the Dair as-Sultan, and the Syrians to the small dark Chapel of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus at the western end of the Rotunda of the Holy Sepulchre.

Throughout the Ottoman period, Greeks and Latins, the two most powerful churches in the Holy Land, used great sums of money to purchase religious rights and ceremonial privileges at the holy places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, while the poorer churches were squeezed out of their old and venerable sanctuaries. It is impossible and also tiresome, to list here all the tedious negotiations that took place between the European monarchs representing the Catholic interests and the officials of the Sublime Porte, acting for their Latins. For example, on June 5, 1673, Louis XIV and Mohammad IV agreed that the Latins (Franciscans) had exclusive rights to the Holy Sepulchre and all the holy places they possessed, both in and outside the city. However, only two years later, in November 1675, the same sultan granted the exclusive possession of the Holy Sepulchre to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in return for an annual contribution of 1000 piasters for the benefit of the Mosque of Ahmad in Constantinople.

To most pilgrims, the behaviour of the Christian hierarchs and monks in the churches and chapels in the Holy Land was outrageous, atrocious and extremely offensive. Many pilgrims had saved life-long for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land to behold the sacred sites, only to witness the impious assaults of one group upon another, not realizing that some of the profanation and violence in the holy places merely served as a kind of substitute for diplomatic quarrels in Europe. When, in 1757, the Franciscans were expelled from the Church of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin in Gethsemane and the Basilica

of the Nativity in Bethlehem, Pope Clement XIII appealed to all Catholic princes for aid. The Sultan, however, followed both his political and economic advantages in his decision and supported the Orthodox.

By the eighteenth century, the Turkish hold on Palestine had diminished, which led to disorder and insecurity that naturally also affected the pilgrims. With the decline of Turkey, also in the dominions, came the rise of Russia, from the days of Peter the Great. Already in 1774, Catherine II of Russia had introduced into her treaty with Turkey a clause in which she claimed the right to protection of all Orthodox subjects in the Ottoman Empire.

In order to regulate the thorny questions about religious properties and rights, the Sublime Porte proclaimed the famous status quo in 1757. For the Catholics, this was an official approbation of the Orthodox encroachments of 1757 and to Western pilgrims it must have appeared as an unjust decision that also prohibited their free access to some of the places of prayer and celebration. Significantly enough, the status quo of 1757 – the Arabs refer to it as the 'statico' – survived the defeat of the Russians in the Crimean War and continued to regulate almost all differences and disputes, more or less until the present day.

Those Western pilgrims who visited the Holy Land around the annual Eastern Orthodox Holy Week celebrations had the chance to observe a religious spectacle, the traditional observance of the Holy Fire. While the origin of this ceremony still remains a mystery, from at least the ninth century on, Christians of the various communities used to receive the Holy Fire from the Greek Orthodox patriarch. It is believed that sometimes during Holy Saturday, the Holy Fire descends from Heaven upon the Tomb of Christ in the aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre. According to the testimony of pilgrims, in the seventeenth century, Greeks, Copts, Ethiopians, Armenians, Georgians and Nestorians still received the Holy Fire from the Greek Orthodox patriarch, who distributed it to the other Christians. From the thirteenth century onwards, the Latins abstained from this ceremony. Today, the Holy Fire celebration commences on Holy Saturday around 8:15 a.m. and concludes at about 2 p.m.

For many centuries, pilgrims to Jerusalem used to follow the traditional 'Way of the Cross', from Pilate's Judgement Hall, the Praetorium, to the hill of Calvary. The popularity of the devotion of the

'Stations of the Cross' increased over the years and it was only natural that Christians looked forward to the occasion when they were at last able to follow the stations in the very city where their Lord and Saviour had been made to carry the cross. The earliest references to a 'Way of the Cross' are found in the itineraries of the pilgrims of the thirteenth century, though with different locations. In addition to the obvious sites, the pilgrims also venerated the houses of Judas, of the Wandering Jew, of the High Priest Annas, of the evil rich Man, of Simon the Leper and the school of the Holy Virgin. By the fifteenth and sixteenth century, pilgrims used to measure the distance between the Praetorium and Calvary and transferred the various places of devotion, together with the distances, to their European cities. Few late medieval Holy Land pilgrims would have realized that the Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem had actually originated from the Cruysganck of Leuven, and that the Brabant-City on the Dijle had played a decisive role in stabilizing the devotion of the Way of the Cross. On his return from Jerusalem (ca 1505), Peter Sterckx had put up a series of 'stations', which, in the seventeenth and, finally, in the nineteenth century, gradually increased in number to the fourteen commemorations of the Way of Sorrows.

While the reform Council of Trent (1562) had put an end to many of the economic abuses connected with the practice of offering indulgences, many Western pilgrims were nevertheless motivated to visit the Holy Land, so as to be relieved *ab omni culpa et poena* (from all guilt and punishment). For pious pilgrims many of the holy places had a forty-day indulgence attached, namely a debt of punishment paid from the superabundant treasury of Christ's merits and the good works of the saints. However, as time went by, pilgrims' motives for acquiring indulgences in the Holy Land gradually decreased. Today, Latin pilgrims can gain a plenary or full indulgence by visiting the major churches in the Holy Land. The church's authority to grant indulgences is derived from Matthew 16:18; 18:18 and more specifically from John 20:23.

For European knights and those of noble birth the Jerusalem pilgrimage offered the rare opportunity to be dubbed Knight of the Holy Sepulchre. Usually, this ceremony took place during the hour before midnight in the holy aedicule, the innermost chamber of the tomb of Christ. The candidate, his spurs buckled on and girded with the sword, stood

in front of the tomb. He was then bidden to kneel and bow himself, so that his breast and arms rested upon the tomb, in order to receive the threefold accolade in the name of the Holy Trinity. It is understood that only members of the aristocracy were given this opportunity. To this day, the pair of spurs and the sword still greet the visitor at the entrance to the Franciscan sacristy of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Those pilgrims who were neither of noble birth nor possessed the necessary ecclesiastical credentials for any kind of preferential treatment by the guardian or his brethren, looked for another form to commemorate their Holy Land pilgrimage. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some of the Franciscan fathers of the Custody of the Holy Land had devised a rather lucrative trade to assist their convent economically, by offering pilgrim-tattoos for those willing to suffer some pain for the benefit of a permanent commemoration. With a small needle, which they dipped into dark blue moisture, they punctured either the thighs or the arms of their customers. Pilgrims received tattoos of all kinds, from simple cross-designs to elaborate arrangements showing the instruments of the Passion, images of the Resurrection and the Nativity, the Jerusalem cross or the Star of Bethlehem. As we see from the descriptions by the pilgrims Jean de Thevenot (1658) and Henry Maundrell (1697), of the 'operations' performed in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the 'trade' was quite profitable.

The seventeenth century saw a great influx of pilgrims, especially of those who were able to describe what they saw. In Jerusalem, the Turkish authorities had also realised the economic value of the pilgrims, which led to the introduction of new taxes; pilgrims even had to pay for a visit to the Tomb of Christ. The testimonies of a few pilgrims of this period should suffice to provide a general impression of the land under Ottoman rule. There were reports by such notable pilgrims as the distinguished painter Cornelius de Bruyn and the Jesuit Father Nau, both of 1674. In 1677, Henry Maundrell, the British chaplain of the Aleppo Company, and, in 1699, the anonymous Franciscan writer, believed to be Felix Beaugrand, came. The English country gentleman, George Sandys (1632), stayed at the Franciscan Convent, for otherwise 'he may have been accused of being a spy'. He provides a rather gloomy picture of the city as a whole, the old buildings all ruined, the new contemptible. He

also gives a mournful picture of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – the Chapel of St Helena – he mentions the ‘sweating pillars’, which weep for the sorrowful Passion of Christ. Others maintained that if one stooped and listened near the entry to the Rotunda, one might hear the blacksmith who made the nails of the cross, still at work in the darkness. Sandys described the ceremony of the Holy Fire as ‘fitting better the solemnities of Bacchus’, which the Turks deride, yet throng to behold. He describes the women whistling and adds that the Ethiopian priest first enters the tomb; without him the miracle would not take place.

The eighteenth century saw an even greater increase of visitors to the Holy Land. Our three pilgrims of this period, Fr. Marcel Ladoire (1719), the Sieur de Tollot (1731) and Frederic Hasselquist (1750), are very diverse characters. Fr. Marcel Ladoire describes himself as a ‘Cordelier, Vicaire du Mont de Sion et de la Terre Sainte’. He was an indefatigable visitor to the holy places. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was kept shut, except when opened by the Turkish representative. Usually eighteen to twenty friars lived in the church and sixty in the convent. The dome of the Sepulchre was open (for the descent of the Holy Fire), but there was a trellis to keep birds out. As part of the agreement with the Turkish Government over repairs to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Fr. Ladoire was also engaged to arrange the release of 150 Turkish prisoners in France. Indeed, on December 13, 1719, the repairs to the dome had been completed and the prisoners were set free.

There could be no greater contrast than between Fr. Ladoire’s descriptions and those of the Sieur de Tollot, who travelled with M. de la Condamine of the French Academy of Science. Because of the general insecurity, the two pilgrims were told that they could not move around the country in French dress, but must dress as Arabs. In the villages in Galilee, they were advised to keep silent, lest they be recognized as foreigners. Fighting between the villages made it impossible for the pilgrims to go to the Jordan.

Our last pilgrim is a somewhat pathetic but gallant figure, the young Swede Frederic Hasselquist, son of a Lutheran pastor. Hasselquist was a botanist and his journey to the Holy Land was sponsored by the king of Sweden and by the great botanist, Linnaeus. He, too, went to the Franciscan Hospice. To his great embarrassment he was asked if he had made the journey from a sense of religious devotion. He replied ‘no’ and changed the subject. He had, in fact, come to study the plants and flowers of the Holy Land. Hasselquist was a very honest person, representing the beginning of a new era. He was a ‘free thinker’ and as such, representative of thousands of people who have visited the Holy Land from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, some as archaeologists, historians, anthropologists and ethnologists, the vast majority, however, just as sightseeing tourists.

‘O pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.

Peace be in thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces.’

With the pilgrims one repeats:

‘Laus Deo qui dedit mihi gratiam de videre’

(Thanks be to God, who gave me grace to see thee)

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The Proskynetarion of Hernen Castle

Victoria VAN AALST and Mat IMMERZEEL

Hernen Castle, near Nijmegen in the east of the Netherlands, was the most ideal location for the organisation of a symposium dedicated to *proskynetaria*, not only for its idyllic ambiance, but also because the only example in the Netherlands of this kind of Palestine pilgrims' souvenirs can be admired here (Fig. 1; Pls 1-9). This well-preserved specimen is owned by the icon restorer and art-historian, Mrs Zuzana Skalova, and was exhibited for the first time on the occasion of this scholarly meeting. It is dated 1832 and therefore perfectly illustrates the production of the Jerusalem ateliers of the first half of the nineteenth century¹.

ICONOGRAPHY

The *proskynetarion*'s measurements are 90 × 158 cm. As on many other *proskynetarions*, the surface is divided into three sections, as if it were a triptych. The 'panels' on the left and right consist of a central rectangular field with four scenes, framed by twenty-four and twenty-six respectively small medallions with representations. The left-hand section is dedicated to the Mother of God and represents an iconographic cycle inspired by the Akathistos Hymn². Episodes from the Virgin's life are rendered in the medallions, starting with the Annunciation and arranged clockwise around the central field. All the images are 'numbered' with the letters from the Greek alphabet, from α to ω. The central field shows: the Dormition of the Virgin; the Mother of God as the Source of Life; St George, the Dragon-Slayer; and Maria *Eleousa* with twelve prophets and kings in medallions (the Tree of Jesse; Pl. 3). The right-hand section is dedicated to the Suffering of Christ, but here the sequence of the scenes in the medallions follows an anti-clockwise direction (Pls 1, 8, 9). Three Church Fathers precede the cycle, which starts in the fourth medallion with the Anointment at Bethania. Here inscriptions clarify the scenes, but in general they are too damaged to

be read in their entirety, or have completely faded. The composition in the rectangular field reflects that on the left, with scenes related to the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai; St Demetrius; the Transfiguration; and Christ Enchained with the Virgin and St John, surrounded by the twelve apostles placed in medallions.

The middle section offers us a view of the inside and outside of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, flanked by themes related to the building and to the Pascal liturgy, biblical events, martyrdoms, crucial matters of Christian doctrine and other sites of interest to pilgrims (Pl. 4). At the top, episodes from the Creation flank the Holy Trinity, below which the Last Judgement is rendered. The lower part is also divided into two zones, the first dedicated to the local legend of the Tree of Life, the second to the life of St Mary of Egypt.

In the centre of the frieze representing the story of the Tree of Life, a panel is provided with a dedicative inscription, reading: X[ATZI] TO(?)NIOC ΠΡΟΚΚΙΝΙΘC ΤΟΙ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΟΥ ΤΑΦΟ[Y] 1832 ('Hajji (An)tonios (?) Pilgrim to the all-holy tomb 1832'; Pl. 7). It is noteworthy that the name of the person who bought this *proskynetarion* is much less legible than the other words. Apparently the 'hajji', whose name seems to be Antonios, has bought a prefabricated souvenir with a standardised text referring to the reason of his visit to Jerusalem. His name must have been entered as soon as the deal was concluded; the paint hardly had time to dry³.

¹ For the production of *proskynetarions*, see: Immerzeel 1999 and 2004, with references to previous publications, as well as the acts of the symposium held in Warsaw in October 2003, published in *Series Byzantina* 3 (2005), and other contributions in this volume.

² See Łaptaś 2004.

³ The inscription on a *proskynetarion* in the Monastery of Saydnaya in Syria from A.D. 1738/39 displays another effect. Only the name of the pilgrim, called Magdalena, can be deciphered (Immerzeel 1999, no. 33; Immerzeel 2005, Sy3).



Pl. 1. *Proskynetarion*, Hernen Castle (Agatha Sloom)

STYLE

Concerning the technological aspects of this *proskynetarion*, it can be concluded that the overall composition gives proof of a symmetric and geometric division into rectangles and circles prior to the designing of the subject matter. The style of the images can be described as naïve and popular. However pejorative these terms may seem, the formal aspects can only be understood within the context of mass production, an unavoidable consequence of a souvenir industry, aiming at selling as many as possible 'postcards' *avant la lettre* to a motivated, though uncritical, public⁴. The design of the persons represented is stereotyped. There is, for example, not a single difference in appearance between St Mary of Egypt and the Virgin. Although figures are also recognisable by their dress, attributes, haircut and beards, differences in gestures and attitudes are the main factors indicating their role in the scenes. The head-shapes vary

from round to oval, while the features display a monotonous uniformity, devoid of any attempt at suggesting expressiveness. The outlines are shaded with darkish colours that return in the simple rendering of the eyes and eyebrows, as well as in the small, straight mouths and there is a consistent touch of red on the cheeks. The main colours used are reduced to red, blue and yellow, while some elements are green and white. Tones in the dresses are obtained only by the restricted addition of tiny white brushstrokes. Landscape elements are created by a mixture of yellow and red, but even here they are reduced to flatly rendered hills with quickly sketched vegetation in green. The execution of the scenes testifies to the reliance of the artist on his routine in producing this kind of object.

The spelling of the Greek inscriptions is far from perfect, suggesting that the painter was arabophone. Other *proskynetaria* are also provided with inscriptions in Arabic, presumably because part of the clientele consisted of Christians living in the Middle East⁵, but this was not the case with the specimen in Hernen. When comparing this *proskynetarion* to other examples, it is remarkable because of its respectable size and its excellent state of conservation. In conclusion, the Hernen *proskynetarion* is a piece of art of modest qualities.

⁴ Immerzeel 1999, Immerzeel 2005.

⁵ For example on the specimen in Saydnaya (Immerzeel 2005, Sy3).

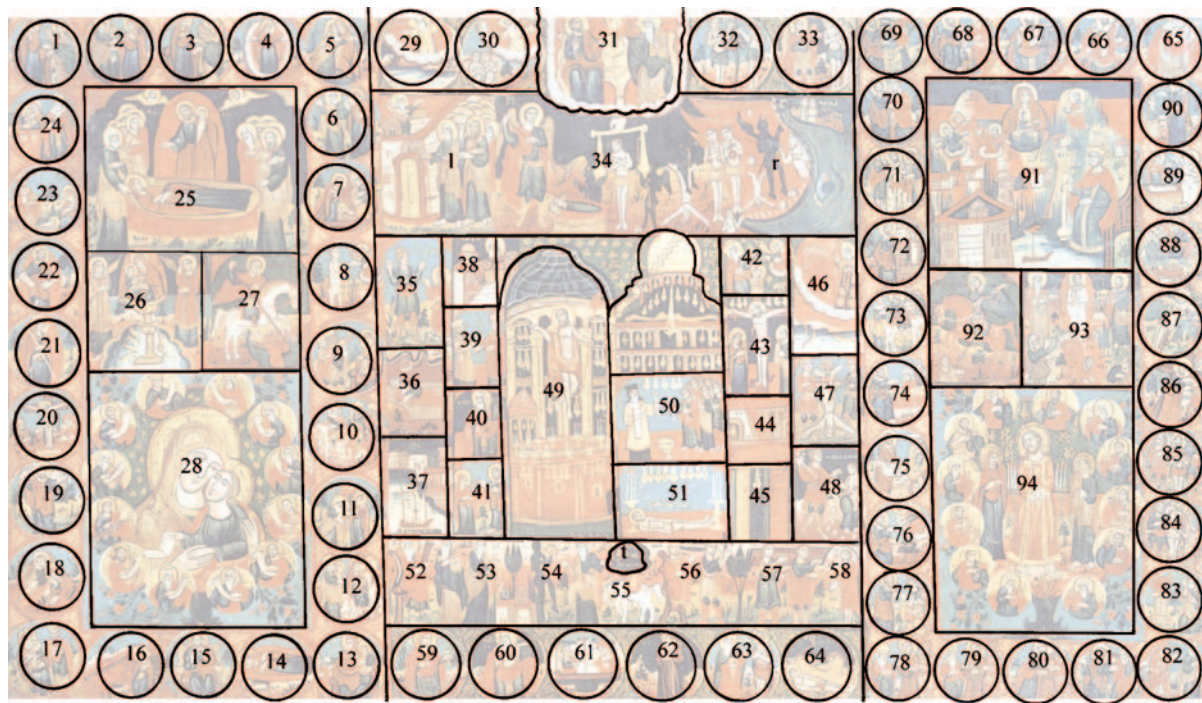


Fig. 1. Scenes on the proskynetarion of Hernen Castle

At the same time, it is a valuable time-document, illustrating what was important to a nineteenth-century Christian 'hajji'.⁶

DESCRIPTION

Left section

Medallions:

1. The Annunciation: Gabriel announces to the Virgin that she will give birth to the Saviour (α)
2. The Annunciation: the astonishment of the Virgin (β)
3. The Annunciation: Gabriel reveals to the Virgin the Divine Omnipotence (Γ)
4. The Virgin Praying (Δ)
5. The Visitation (ε)
6. The Virgin and Joseph (Z)
7. The Nativity: the Mother of God, Joseph and the Child in the crib (H)
8. An angel appearing to the shepherds (Θ)
9. The Adoration of the Three Magi (ι)
10. The Departure of the Magi (κ)
11. The Presentation in the Temple (λ)
12. The Flight into Egypt (M)

13. The Mother of God with the Child and John the Baptist (N)
14. The Mother of God and the Child, resting in a cave (ξ)
15. Christ Enthroned (\omicron)
16. The Nativity (π)
17. The Adoration by an unidentified man of the Mother of God with the Child (ρ)
18. St John, sleeping, and the Mother of God of Sorrows (C)
19. The Good Shepherd (τ)
20. The Virgin's vision about the Crucifixion? (υ)
21. The Virgin's vision about the lance that will pierce her Son (Φ)
22. Christ as High Priest? (χ)
23. Adoration by a bishop (Ψ)
24. Adoration by a bishop (ω)

Centre:

25. The Dormition of the Virgin (H KIMICIC)

⁶ The authors would like to express their gratitude to Annet Rijtma for her assistance in analysing the *proskynetarion*, as well as to Agatha Sloot for photographing.



Pl. 2. The Dormition (Agatha Sloot)



Pl. 3. Maria Eleousa (Agatha Sloot)



Pl. 4. Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Mat Immerzeel)



Pl. 5. Holy Trinity (Mat Immerzeel)



Pl. 6. The Slaying of the Innocents (Mat Immerzeel)



Pl. 7. Inscription (Mat Immerzeel)



Pl. 8. Monastery of St Catherine (Agatha Sloot)



Pl. 9. Christ Enchained (Agatha Sloot)

26. The Mother of God as the Source of Life with two angels (inscriptions near angels illegible)
27. St George the Dragon-Slayer (ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟC)
28. Maria *Eleousa* with twelve prophets (Tree of Jesse)

Middle section

Upper zone:

29. The Creation of the World
30. The Creation of Adam and Eve
31. The Holy Trinity
32. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
33. The Expulsion from Paradise
34. The Last Judgement:
 - a. Heaven: Abraham with a soul on his lap (AB[PAAM]) and the twelve apostles outside the city walls.
 - b. Archangel Michael and the Weighing of Souls (M[IKAHA])
 - c. Hell, represented as a devouring monster, with devils and damned souls (in the flames coming out of the beak of the monster: H KOΛACIC OMIAONAC; to the right: H AMAPTOAI)

Central zone:

35. The Martyrdom of St Stephen (CTHΦANOC)
36. The Lamentation of Baruch (BAPΩK)
37. The Harbour of Jaffa (IAΦA)
38. St Sabas (CABA)
39. The Exaltation of the Cross by Constantine and Helena
40. St James, first bishop of Jerusalem (HAKOBOC)
41. Christ with Mary Magdalene (MA...)
42. The Sacrifice of Isaac (AB[A]AM)
43. The Crucifixion
44. Part of the Church of the Anastasis?
45. The opened and closed doors of the Church of the Anastasis
46. The Ascension of Elijah (HAIAC)
47. The Martyrdom of Isaia (ICAHA)
48. The Slaying of the Innocents (H BPOKTONIA)

Centre:

49. Interior of the Rotunda and the Resurrection (O AΓΙOC TAΦOC)
50. Interior of the church with the hanging lamps and the Greek Orthodox patriarch distributing the Holy Eastern Fire

51. The Holy Sepulchre (O EΠΙΘΑΦΙON)

Lower zone:

52. Lot receives a part of the Tree of Life (EKCO-MOΛOΓION)
53. Lot gives water to the Tree of Life (ΠOTICI ΔENΔP IC???)
54. The devil drinks the Life-Giving Water (ΠINI TONIPO) τ. Inscription: X[ATZI] TO(?)NIOC ΠPOCKINITHC TOI ΠANA-ΓIOY TAΦO[Y] 1832 ('Hadji Antonios (?) Pilgrim of the all-holy Sepulchre 1832').
55. King Solomon gives instructions for the building of the Temple (KOFITOC ITO CO[AO]MO)
56. A man cuts down the Tree of Life (KAN-ITO....)
57. The wood for the Cross is carried away by two men (CIKONITO EIAO)
58. The Hanging of Judas (O HΩΔA)
59. St Mary of Egypt (A PIA)
60. St Athanasius (O AΓΙOC ATANACIOC)
61. St Mary of Egypt crosses the sea (illegible)
62. St Mary of Egypt as a nun ([MA]PIA)
63. St Mary of Egypt receives the cloth of St Zosimas (METAIBEO)
64. The Burial of St Mary of Egypt with the help of a lion (O AE TECE)

Right section

Medallions:

- 65-67. The Saints Gregory (ΓPITOPIO), John Chrysostom and Basil
68. The Anointment at Bethania
69. Zacchaeus climbing a tree to see Christ
70. The Healing of a woman
71. The Baptism in the Jordan
72. The Resurrection of Lazarus (O ΛACA)
73. The Entry into Jerusalem (O BA...O)
74. The Last Supper (ΔIA MI)
75. The Washing of the Disciples' Feet (illegible)
76. Christ Praying in Gethsemane (O ΠPOC ... XI)
77. Prayer in Gethsemane: St Peter and two youths (O KZΩAICA)
78. Christ before Pilate (O ΠIIA)
79. Christ before Caiaphas (KAIAΦAC)
80. The Betrayal of Judas (H ΠPOTOIA)
81. Peter's Promise (illegible)
82. Peter's Denial to the serving-maid (ANICIOC or AΛICIC)

83. Peter's Denial and the cock (O ΠΕΤΡΟC)
84. Christ Scourged (Flagellation; MA[P]T[I]CIC)
85. Christ with the Crown of Thorns
86. The Carrying of the Cross (Simon of Cyrene; illegible)
87. The Descent from the Cross (Joseph of Arimathaea;..ACIC)
88. The Ascension (ANACTACIC)
89. Mary Magdalene at the Empty Sepulchre (O ΜΙΡΑΦΟΡΙC)
90. The Incredulity of Thomas (O ΘΟΜΑC)

Centre:

91. The Monastery of St Catherine (CINAIΟΠΟC)
92. St Demetrius (ΔΙΜΙΤΡΙΟC)
93. The Transfiguration (E ΜΕΤΑΜΟΡΦΟCΙC)
94. Christ Enchained with the Mother of God and St John, with images of the apostles (IX XC; ΜΡΘΥ; ΙΩ)

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A Holy Map to Christian Tradition: Preliminary Notes on Painted Proskynetaria of Jerusalem in the Ottoman Era

Zuzana SKALOVA

For Victoria van Aalst, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the A.A. Bredius Foundation, in proskynesis

All Christian painted *proskynetaria* follow a cartographical prototype; in the centre of the walled city of Jerusalem, the Church of the Resurrection (for the Orthodox, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre), looms large, recognizable by its dome and drawn in section. The Holy Sepulchre is surrounded by other monuments, adorned with religious scenes believed to be historical. On this basically Western cartographical view, the places of pilgrimage are often embellished with vignettes, cartouches, or *clipei*, containing bust-portraits of Christ, the Virgin Mary and Child, as well as other relevant holy persons or scenes from their lives, borrowed from Greek Orthodox religious prints, such as those illustrating the *Akathistos* Hymn (Pl. 1)¹.

Jerusalem is depicted as a medieval fortress, filled exclusively with Christian *loca sancta* and rendered invincible by its fortified walls. Outside stretches the timeless holy landscape, its horizon marked by the river Jordan or by the Mediterranean Sea. The landscape of the Holy Land is studded with more religious scenes, marking Old and New Testament sites, sometimes enlivened by scenes from the pilgrimage; travellers are shown arriving by ships, on camels, or on foot. As a genre, these quotidian scenes recall drawings, made between 1723 and 1747 by the Ukrainian monk Barsky (Pl. 2)². The earliest painted *proskynetaria* of Jerusalem appear in the seventeenth century³. Their production is a late Ottoman phenomenon, which declined with the swift introduction of photography in Jerusalem in the 1860s⁴. I will first try to place these paintings in their religious, cultural and political context, in an effort to elucidate the rationale for their appearance and manufacture.

THRICE HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM

The representation of Jerusalem as an exclusively Christian holy city is, of course, a vision. In 1453, the fall of Constantinople was celebrated as a victory of the Islam. As a result, a substantial part of the Christian minorities came under the rule of the Turkish Sultan, who became the protector of all holy sites, Jewish, Christian and Muslim. Jerusalem remained on the pilgrimage map and continued to be one of the most cosmopolitan and polyglot cities on earth.

Within the walls of this thrice Holy City, three great faiths cohabit and clash. Three conflicting ideas about eternity – based on three Books: the Old and New Testaments and the Koran – even differ about time; the Jews count from the creation of the world, the Christians from the birth of Jesus Christ and the Muslims from the birth of Mohammed. For all of them, Jerusalem was a holy city with their own sacred sites and shrines – some shared, some disputed and some converted. To the Jew, Jerusalem is still the city of Jehovah, where the Temple was built by King Solomon on the Temple Mount (908 B.C.). To the Muslim, this site, known as Mount Moriah, is also very holy, third only to Mecca and Medina. Next to the remains of the Temple, the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque mark the place to which the Prophet

¹ Measurements: 73 × 50 cm; Papastratos 1990, I, 132, Fig. 122.

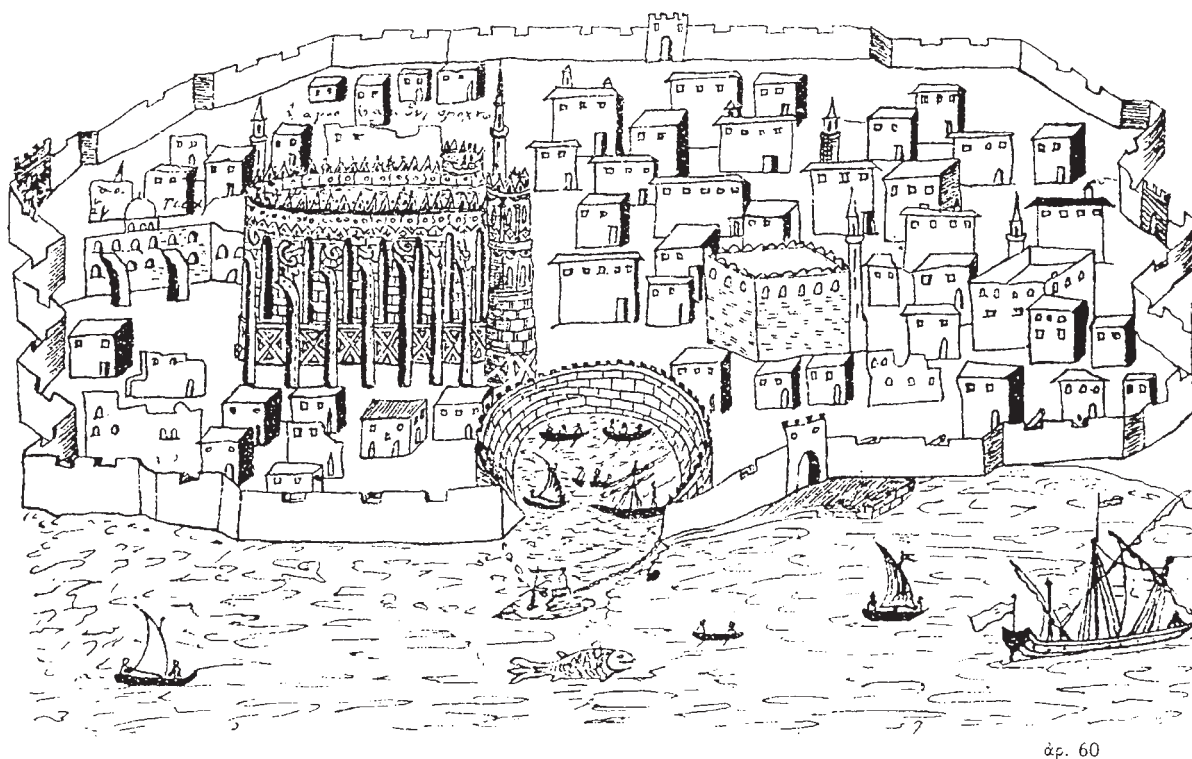
² Barskij 1785/1787.

³ Among the oldest-known examples might be the Georgian painting from the seventeenth century, executed in Palestine on a wooden support and preserved in the Georgian Monastery of the Holy Cross. I am indebted to Yuri Piatnitsky for showing me a picture.

⁴ Armenians were the pioneer photographers in the cities of the Middle East. Yessayi Garabedian, the Armenian patriarch in Jerusalem from 1865, set up a photographic studio. See Osman 1999, 132.



Pl. 1. The Akathistos Hymn – the Virgin, Unfading Rose. Copper engraving; unknown artist, Venice, 1819; Monastery of Saint Espraxia, Hydra, Greece (after Papastratos 1990, I, Fig. 122)



Pl. 2. Drawing of Famagusta, Cyprus, by Barsky, between 1723 and 1747

Mohammed is believed to have returned to earth after his flight through the Seven Heavens on al-Burak, his wondrous horse⁵. The Christian regards Jerusalem as the place of Christ's Crucifixion as a human being, his Resurrection and his anticipated Second Coming as the Messiah. The most important monument to this belief is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, traditionally seen as the centre of the Christian world and the focus of pilgrimages, usually scheduled to reach Jerusalem for the celebration of Easter⁶.

As Christianity sought to reaffirm the historical reality of its beginnings in the Holy Land with figurative art illustrating the Bible, churches were built and adorned to commemorate the sites linked with the Gospels. These places soon attracted pilgrims and were established as holy sites. Splendidly refurbished for the last time during the Crusader presence in the Holy Land – 'liberated' from Muslim rule between 1099 and 1187 – these sites had since been in decline⁷.

From the arrival of the Arabs, Jerusalem was divided into distinct Jewish⁸, Christian and Muslim quarters. The Christian part of the walled area of

Old Jerusalem is subdivided between Greeks (Melkites), representing the Chalcedonian fraction, as did the Georgians⁹, and the non-Chalcedonian Armenians, Copts, Ethiopians, native Palestinians and Syrians. The Latins, i.e. the Roman Catholics, remained after the Crusaders left. The latecomers were the Russian, Serbian and Bulgarian churches and Protestant and Uniate churches.

⁵ Muslim prints of Mecca and Medina as well as Jerusalem are already known from thirteenth-century Western sources; Muslim parallels to the Christian written *proskynetaria* show illustrations of holy tombs of the Prophet Mohammed and his companions, Abu Bakr and Umar, in Mecca and Medina. For prints contemporary with the first painted *proskynetaria*, see Adriani Relandi, *De religione mohammedica libri duo*, Utrecht 1717 (quoted in Witkam 2002).

⁶ These paragraphs were inspired by H.V. Morton's description of Jerusalem before Palestine became Israel again. See Morton 1984, 46-47 and 51-52.

⁷ Except for some fragments, old art has been lost, surviving only in descriptions by the pilgrims for whom it was made.

⁸ The Jewish community was insignificant during the period studied in this survey.

⁹ The Georgians, unable to pay rent to the Ottomans, were forced to retire in 1644.

For this survey it is relevant to recall that, since Saladin broke-up the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187, the shrines within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – the central and most important part of *proskynetaria* – were divided between the Roman Catholic Church (mainly Italians and French¹⁰) and five Orthodox churches (Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Greek and Syrian). The numerous shrines reflect this corporate spirit. Rows of westernised sacred pictures on canvas, hanging next to Orthodox panels, are enlivened by hybrid creations, dating from the Ottoman era. Imported or produced in the local cosmopolitan workshops, these latter images, surviving blackened and torn, were overlooked by art historians and those few who paid attention to them attributed them to a ‘Jerusalem school’¹¹. This little-known cosmopolitan artistic production needs comprehensive documentation, supported by a conservation mission, as many re-discoveries can be expected after professional cleaning.

GENESIS OF THE PAINTED *PROSKYNETARION*

So far, some sixty pieces have been documented¹². More probably survived, but we would not find them hanging in Jerusalem. These easily-portable canvases were created for dispersal to all corners of Christianity as holy souvenirs and tools of religious enlightenment. They were brought to Russia, the Balkans (where Orthodox Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Rumanians and Serbs lived under the Turks, as well as to the Levant regions and Egypt, where the *Romaoi*, or *Rumi*, and ancient Orthodox minorities survived as *dhimis*, the ‘people of the Book’, under the protection of their Arab, Mameluk and Turkish lords. We should check whether *proskynetaria* reached Ethiopia. Such

impressive global dispersal bears witness to the universal appeal of these technically modest and artistically mediocre paintings, transcending sectarian differences.

When we consider the religious and political context of the time, the emotional impact that a painted *proskynetarion* would have on a Christian viewer, living in the Muslim Ottoman Empire, or one travelling through vast territories to Jerusalem and back home, becomes apparent. Such collective imagery of most of the Christian holy sites in Palestine must have been overwhelming to behold. It was also a powerful didactic tool of Christian *propaganda fidae*! The question arises: of which church?

The most numerous and articulate Christians living within the Ottoman Empire were the Greek Orthodox, on the mainland and in Asia Minor, with their patriarch in Istanbul. Communities of the *Rumi* or Melkites, not necessarily always ethnic Greeks but adhering to the Greek Orthodox Church, also lived dispersed in the Near East among the arabophone Syrians, Copts and other minorities. The religious geography of Ottoman Christians is a subject for specialists and has only recently been authoritatively described and classified by Masters in his brilliant study *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World*¹³. Their sacred pictures, however, still need an extensive survey, in order to establish the role of Jerusalem in attracting artists and spreading iconographic models in the region¹⁴. Bear in mind that, while icons continued to be an integral part of Christian spiritual life, such figurative representations were anathema to the religious principles of Islamic society. This situation led to conflicts which caused an icon painting crisis in the Near East¹⁵.

It was the active Armenians, who, emigrating over the centuries from their ill-starred homeland to various places in the world and thanks to their education and interrelations, were able to invigorate the moribund state of icon painting. The Western technique of painting on canvas arrived in Jerusalem by two channels: directly from Italy via the Latins, and indirectly, from the Persian city of Isfahan (actually its westernised suburb, New Julfa)¹⁶. From the seventeenth until the end of the eighteenth century, itinerant Armenian painters (*naqqash*), organised in guilds, called *hamkar*, produced much-needed sacred pictures, usually on large inferior canvases, adapting Europe’s Baroque

¹⁰ In the fourteenth century, the Franciscan custody of the holy places in Jerusalem extended to Old Cairo. The French claim sole authority, based on a treaty of 1535.

¹¹ Agémian 1969, 122-124; Agémian 1993, 180-181; Immerzeel 1997, 121; Skalova/Gabra 2003, 145-148.

¹² See the inventories in Immerzeel 1999 and Immerzeel/Deluga/Laptaš 2005.

¹³ Masters 2001.

¹⁴ Several significant studies have already appeared, see Agémian 1969; Agémian 1993; Immerzeel 1997; Immerzeel 1999; Immerzeel 2005; Zibawi 1995.

¹⁵ See this author’s chapter, ‘Icons from the Ottoman Era (1517-1798)’ in Skalova/Gabra 2003, 120-129.

¹⁶ Carswell 1968.

style and technique to the parochial needs of depleted churches and monasteries in the Levant and Egypt. The Armenian Bible, printed in 1666 in Amsterdam and embellished with woodcuts by the Dutchman Christoffel van Sichem became their model-book. Another such printed source was Piscator's Bible¹⁷.

Orthodox prints and icons on paper and cloth, which appeared at the same time, also circulated and were widely used as models for paintings¹⁸. The church quickly discovered the marketable potential of these cheap *memorabilia*, which enjoyed unbelievable popularity in their heyday. Many prints attest to an international enterprise, involving Greeks, Austrians, Italians and Ukrainians (Lvov had a large Armenian community!), united in their efforts to spread the fame of the holy Christian sites in Ottoman lands, which had to be maintained and visited.

GREEK PROTOTYPES

Can the painted *proskynetaria* be called icons? While their technique attests that they emerged from workshops familiar with the quick *naqqash* production of icons on canvas, they were conceived in a Greek, post-Byzantine environment, obviously fulfilling multiple functions. Their portability makes them akin to a group of religious articles, such as portable altar cloths (*antimensia*), traditionally painted or printed on textile, into the corners of which holy relics were sewn (Pl. 3)¹⁹. Other such fabricated artefacts were letters of indulgence and general views of the famous places of pilgrimage. The ultimate prototype must have been some large print on paper or cloth, reproducing the view of the Holy City of Jerusalem. Look at the example from ca 1723, preserved in the Church of St Paraskevi in Siatista, and read its dedicatory Greek inscription (Pl. 4):

An accurate drawing of the Holy City of Jerusalem, within and without the walls, together with its environs, more complete and distinct than previous ones. Printed in the reign of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Most Wise Kyrios Chrysanthos, and of the Most Holy Metropolitan of Belgrade, Kirios Kirios Moisis Petrovitzis, under the direction of Yeorgios Trapezountios Hypomenas I.Φ.(?), and the supervision of Yermanos hieromonk and Archimandrite of the Holy Sepulchre, and dedicated to the ruler and lord of this

*Holy Land. Given for the benefit of all Orthodox Christians.*²⁰.

This large printed *proskynetarion* of Jerusalem and surrounding countryside includes Christian and Islamic monuments. It appears to be a product of cosmopolitan cooperation, conceived and supervised at the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem, sponsored by the Serbian Orthodox Church and printed in Vienna, according to the Latin inscription by Frangiskos Amvrosios Diettel. Its sacred places are identified by Greek and Latin inscriptions, making the picture suitable for Christians from East and West. Such popular prints were, however, fragile and perishable. This is the sole exemplar listed by the diligent Greek scholar, Dory Papastratos, who, over twenty years, collected Greek Orthodox religious engravings, dating from 1665 to 1899, in her fine and inspiring book *Paper Icons*²¹.

THE TRANSITION FROM PRINTED TO PAINTED PROSKYNETARIA

Papastratos' quote from the correspondence left by one of many Greek traders of printed *memorabilia*, Hatzikyriakis from Vourla, is relevant for this study, as it illustrates how a modest print on paper, when enlarged and embellished with gold and colours, became a luxurious holy souvenir to cherish. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Hatzikyriakis represented the interests of the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, sending his consignments of prints with the view of the monastery and its saints as far as Moscow, Constantinople and the Danubian provinces (between 1688 and 1709, more than 19,000 woodcuts!). Papastratos points out that:

¹⁷ The Greek *antimensia* were used in Egypt as models for icons and hung above altars as icons, for example in the Church of the Holy Virgin in the Monastery of the Syrians, Wadi al-Natrun. See Skalova's chapter 'Armenian "Baroque icons" on Canvas' in Skalova/Gabra 2003, 124-127, 148 and Cat. 33b.

¹⁸ Papastratos 1990. The influence of such models, used in Cairo by Armenian and Coptic icon-painters, is visually attested, see for example cat. nos 23, 25, 31, 33, in Skalova/Gabra 2003.

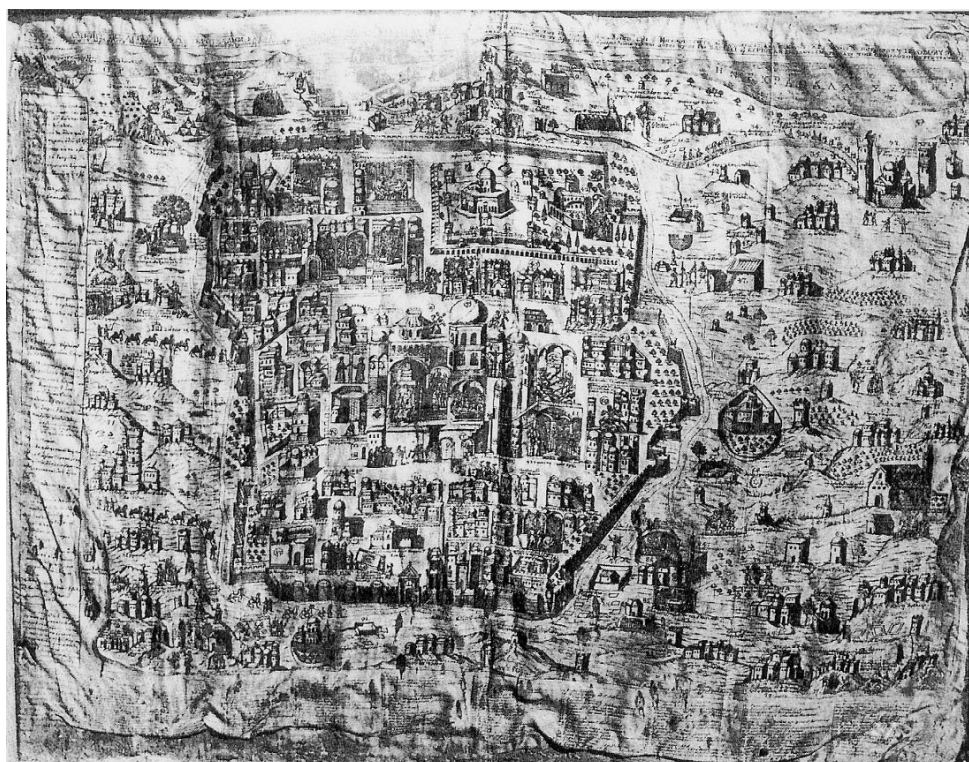
¹⁹ Papastratos 1990, II, 544-559 and ill.

²⁰ Measurements: 72 × 88 cm; Papastratos 1990, II, 531, ill. no. 567.

²¹ Papastratos 1990, II, 531-534, ill. no. 567.



Pl. 3. Antimension. Copper engraving by an unknown engraver, printed on cloth in Vienna or Venice, 1733; Metropolitan Church, Kos (after Papastratos 1990, II, Fig. 580)



Pl. 4. The Holy City of Jerusalem. Copper engraving by Franciskos Amvrosios Dietell in Vienna, ca 1723; Church of St Paraskevi, Siatista (after Papastratos 1990, II, Fig. 567)

*Hatzikyriakis used to print on cloth large and particularly well-executed woodcuts intended for high-ranking personages. Regarding one such woodcut which he presented to John Sobieski, king of Poland, he noted: 'I went and prepared a Mount Sinai as big as a rush mat. I numbered the features in gold, I drew up a key ... the king (and) the queen were seated ... Averkios brought the Mount Sinai ... he placed the key in the king's hands (and) he looked closely at it, read it and marvelled at it. He directed it be nailed up on the wall and he summoned the nobles and pointed out (the features) to them according to the key.' Of another woodcut which he gave to the Cossack leader, the hetman Mazepa, he wrote: '(Mazepa) shows affection for Mount Sinai. I gave him a large picture on cloth; he keeps it in his seraglio.'*²²

HOLY DIDACTIC ARTEFACTS OF POST-BYZANTINE HELLENISM

While there is no doubt that the painted *proskynetaria* are Greek, this assertion needs to be expanded. Indeed, the figures of Greek monks, populating the painted *proskynetaria* of the Holy Sepulchre, confirm this affiliation²³. No Ethiopian, Coptic or Russian priests are depicted on *proskynetaria* known to me – and yet, some of these communities shared the administration of the site in the Ottoman era²⁴. Who were the men behind such an enterprise, and why? Who were the artisans? And who were the first well-to-do clients?

The inscriptions under the individual pictures, explaining where the pilgrim was and prayed, may echo recitations from the Holy Writing. We know from pilgrims' diaries that the prayers *in loco* were particularly valued²⁵. It is noteworthy that the language of these *nomina sacra* is usually Greek, often *Rumi* Greek. The painters sometimes used the Turkish word, *hadzi*, which has a Muslim connotation (i.e. a Muslim who has made a *hadj*/pilgrimage to Mecca), for a future Christian buyer, as pointed out by Yuri Piatnitsky on the dated *proskynetarion* preserved in the Hermitage²⁶.

Easily portable *proskynetaria* – those without colophons for inserting the pilgrim's name – could be taken with him by the pilgrim, but they could also be taken to distant religious fairs (Greek *paneigyrics* or Coptic *mulids*). They would make splendid incentives to stimulate future pilgrimages and therefore fulfil the same, but more durable, purpose as the better-known religious prints. The Greek

inscriptions suggest that they were, for the most part, originally destined for the Greek homeland and schools of Greek education, and for the churches and their Sunday schools in the diaspora. The church elders must have felt that visual didactic links with the religious past were very useful to enhance the knowledge of the Orthodox living among Muslims and 'to show them the way' to Jerusalem. Certainly, money from the sale of souvenirs would be used by the impoverished patriarchate to maintain and repair the holy sites in their custody.

It is known that the inhabitants of the Ottoman territory were surprisingly mobile, like European Union citizens today. Pilgrimages have followed traditional routes since time immemorial. As the majority of pilgrims visited the depicted places, the appeal of *proskynetaria* was universal. That the legends were written in Greek was no problem, for most well-to-do pilgrims who would purchase and use them could read. For illiterates, the appeal of these 'painted guides', mapping Christian tradition, can be compared to that of medieval *biblia pauperum*.

As the pro- or non-Chalcedon stand was obviously of lesser importance, the Copts or Syrians would also acquire *proskynetaria* for their Sunday schools. What mattered was a common Christian feeling about shared holy sites and, above all, the

²² Papastratos 1990, I, 19-20, with notes 5-8; see also Papastratos 1981.

²³ 'Topographie de la Palestine' is described as a painting on wood, measuring 100 × 78 cm, and dated to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Collection Museum Sursock, Beirut. Three other examples are mentioned. See Catalogue Beyrouth 1969, no. 77, 208-209; Piatnitsky 2001.

²⁴ However, for two Armenian *proskynetaria*, see Meinardus 2005.

²⁵ As recorded by numerous Russian pilgrims. I wish to thank Father Arsenii, librarian of the New Valaamo Monastery (Finland), who found many unpublished hand-written records in his archives (transferred from the USSR during World War II).

²⁶ Piatnitsky 2001. The honorary title, *hadzi*, meaning 'pilgrim' in Turkish, became part of many Greek surnames at that time, as, for example: Hadzikyriakos from Vourla. According to Herman Teule, *hajji*, *turio* and *maktusi* are Syriac synonyms (see his contribution in this volume). The title, *muqaddis*, meaning the pilgrim to Jerusalem (in Arabic Al-Qudsi), was used in Coptic-Arabic Egypt for pilgrims who reached the Holy City, in the sense of 'holy person', in imitation of *al-maqdisi maqdsōyō* or *muqsi* the Muslim title, *hadji*, given to those who made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

belief that Jesus Christ was the resurrected Son of God. Hence, the Holy Sepulchre, the very site symbolizing His Resurrection, became, not only the focus of veneration but, in addition, proof of the Incarnation. The historical importance of this fact goes without saying. The phenomenon of the interaction of Greek-inscribed painted *proskynetaria* with other communities can be called ecumenical – and this growing ecumenicity is typical for the late Ottoman era.

At this stage of research, we can assume that the earliest painted *proskynetaria* were products of post-Byzantine Hellenism, initiated in some Greek scriptorium, arguably close to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, thus belonging to the so-called *Rumi* cultural environment. Certain documentary details (as researched by Piatnitsky), which help scholars to date individual pieces, point to a workshop, supervised by alert religious intelligentsia.

From the fact that Russian pilgrims began visiting the Holy Land in increasing numbers only after the Russo-Turkish war of 1827-29, it can be deduced that, initially, Melkite and arabophone Christians might have been the main clientele. From a few dozen Russian travellers in 1829, the figure rose to 200 a year in the 1840s and 400 a year in the 1850s. Interestingly, these visitors were government officials, including Tsar Nicholas I himself, and other members of the nobility in pursuit of his new policy. The Russian tsars proclaimed themselves protectors of Eastern Christianity and Moscow the Third Rome, replacing Constantinople. Only as late as the end of the nineteenth century did pilgrimage become a journey for the common people. Robert Nicols sums up the political motifs of early Russian written accounts: 'It was a way to promote Russia's influence in the Turkish Empire and at the same time counter the inroads of Catholic France and Protestant Britain.'²⁷ Recall the mission to Palestine 'to make reconnaissance in the patriarchate in Jerusalem'²⁸ by the clever and kind Archimandrite Porfiri Uspensky. In 1853 the mission ended in failure, dissolving at the outbreak of Crimean War.

²⁷ Nicols 1985, 17, re-quoting 'Palomničestvo', in *Ėnciklopedičeskij slovar'*, Vol. 44, St Petersburg 1963, 645. See also Stavrou, 1963, 102.

²⁸ Hopwood 1969.

²⁹ See note 24.

³⁰ Vranoussis 1986, 19.

³¹ Vranoussis 1986, 43.

The large, lavish *proskynetarion* in the Hermitage, dating from 1876 and painted on a red background, could certainly have been purchased by well-to-do Russians. Perhaps the red colouring not only symbolizes the bloody sacrifice of Christ (as Piatnitsky rightly suggests), but also appealed to the typically Russian love for this colour, 'red' being synonymous with 'beautiful'. Notably, earlier, more modest *proskynetaria* have blue or green backgrounds.

PRODUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY OF PAINTED PROSKYNETARIA

Fabricated *in situ* for at least two hundred years, these large canvas paintings make us wonder how they were made. Few *proskynetaria* are identical. Until more specimens have been catalogued to support this view, one imagines that prints were an asset to be exploited as models, either in part or for ornamental motifs. Each piece could be 'custom-made' from a model-book. Their manufacture would resemble the copying industry of a scriptorium, which would have used books, prints, illustrated bibles and guides as models. It should be stressed that the Near Eastern Christian communities did not have the printing press before the end of eighteenth century, lagging behind the West by two hundred years. Papastratos found that, as an exception, the St Catherine Monastery in Sinai produced its own prints. The wooden matrixes have still been preserved²⁹.

It was obviously, so to say, easier to paint at home than to import from abroad in Ottoman Jerusalem. To paint large, colourful and sturdy canvases quickly *in situ* – customized for the client – was better business than to import fragile prints on paper, mostly limited in size. This supposition is corroborated by the phenomenon of hand-written liturgical books; it took a long time for printed books to supersede manuscript codices. Manuscripts, still preserved in Greek and Coptic libraries, were copied from printed books and this practice continued until the late nineteenth century³⁰. In Istanbul, for example, the Greek Patriarchate set up a printing press in 1627, but this was immediately smashed by the Janissaries. It only reopened in 1798, three hundred years after the first Greek press in Venice³¹.

PERSONAL NOTE ON TWO CASE HISTORIES

The organisers of the Hernen symposium asked me to discuss the techniques and materials used for the

fabrication of these portable souvenirs and to advise on how to conserve them, as only a few have survived in a well-preserved state. How often do I hear modern pilgrims recall where they had seen these modest paintings! The first one I glimpsed was displayed in a London antique shop in the 1970s. It was small and darkish, with a green background, probably quite old and heavily retouched. Similar items were and are for sale in Greece. In 1983, I saw one badly torn canvas in a Moscow restoration workshop, where nobody knew what it was³². That same year I was shown another one in the Netherlands, which is now in Hernen Castle³³. Later, when working in Egypt, I came across a dozen of these pictures, hanging in churches and monasteries in Cairo and the provinces, all attesting to these objects' 'missionary' role³⁴. Some were left torn and dusty, other suffered from cleaning and camouflaged retouching by well-meaning non-specialists.

1. *Proskynetarion in Saint Antony's Monastery, Egypt*
I have participated in the restoration of only one *proskynetarion*, which is in the collection of the Coptic Monastery of Saint Antony the Great in the Eastern Desert on the Red Sea³⁵. The piece is

³² Two important recent exhibitions of the sacred objects of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, held in the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, show the renewed interest and the inherent understanding of the value of these sacred objects by Russian scholarship (Piatnitsky 2001).

³³ This *proskynetarion* was purchased and restored by the art dealer.

³⁴ Meinardus 1967. For new discoveries in Egypt see: Immerzeel 1999 and 2005, and the forthcoming CD documentation of the 'Icon Conservation Project', jointly conducted by the American Research Center Egypt in cooperation with the Coptic Institute of Higher Studies and the Supreme Council of Antiquities between 1999 and 2005.

³⁵ The primer was not analyzed. It is probably anhydrite, sensitive to humidity and change of temperature. The peeling



Pl. 5. *Proskynetarion in Saint Antony's Monastery, Egypt* (Mat Immerzeel)

unusual, having the image of an evangelist in each corner, which, according to Piatnitsky, is an iconographic detail akin to the shroud (Pl. 5).

The canvas has survived in an irregular shape, looking as if it had been left to dry un-stretched, perhaps during the unrecorded mounting with aqueous glue on a wooden support in Egypt. The painting was peeling and, in spite of consolidation treatment applied in 1991, it continues to flake. Weakly-bound and quickly-made, the St Antony piece is, from a technical point of view, an inferior product of mass-production, placing *proskynetaria* between art and craft³⁶.

Imagine how the manufacture of these religious paintings was fragmented, in specialised workshops, among indifferent workers: first, a home-spun cotton canvas was pierced at its edges with holes about 5 cm apart, dipped in liquid white primer and stretched by thin rope, attached to a wooden stretcher, to dry. The scalloped edges, formed when the primed canvas dried on the stretcher, are still preserved on many *proskynetaria*. The primer was a liquid mixture of chalk and/or gypsum and animal glue, dissolved in water. This 'dipping' method allowed for a quick process, replacing more laborious manual application of a solid priming layer (as on icon panels). The painting technique was, as a rule, 'distemper', i.e. pigments mixed with water-soluble adhesive, animal glue, egg, perhaps some locally available resin (gum Arabic?). Only basic pigments were used: white, black, red, yellow ochre, green, and, exceptionally, blue or genuine gold. Usually, the gold is the cheaper 'gold dust', mixed

with adhesive. Originally, these paintings were probably seldom varnished³⁷.

The finished canvas would be removed from the stretcher and folded for easy transportation. When the *proskynetaria* reached their new destinations in provincial Russia or Egypt, where they were often donated to the local churches by the pilgrims, those who were instructed to mount them on new stretchers were not professionals. Some *proskynetaria* survived, nailed to makeshift frames, others were glued to wooden panels or larger canvas supports, yet quite a few were left abandoned in some dusty corner, sharing the neglect of religious art in their new homelands.

2. The *Proskynetarion* in Hernen Castle

This well-preserved central piece of the present volume emanates an invaluable message; appreciation begets care! It was professionally and expensively re-lined and framed in the 1970s, as any valued painting should be, and it keeps fine. This is a fine example of how to restore *proskynetaria*. If they are well preserved, they can be stabilised as canvas paintings. If they were painted on a gypsum (anhydrite) ground, as I assume the St Antony *proskynetarion* was, they should be treated like other vulnerable ethnographical paintings on canvas.

The painted *proskynetaria* – once dispersed from the centre of the Christian World to its corners – are now being catalogued internationally, as they well deserve. When more have been classified, we will be able to evaluate the preliminary suggestions presented here. The survival of these fragile artefacts into the third millennium depends on recognition of their value.

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proskynetarion, hanging in the church, was conserved in 1990 in the framework of the joint Dutch-Egyptian 'Coptic Icons Conservation Project', directed by the present author between 1989 and 1996. See Z. Skalova, *Conservation Problems in Egypt. Studies in the Monastery of St. Antony the Great at the Red Sea. Icons*, conducted in cooperation with Father Maximus al-Antuni and W. Hesterman (unpublished report presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department for Development Cooperation, of the Netherlands).

³⁶ These observations are based on this experience and on information obtained from the National Museum in Warsaw, courtesy of Ms. Magda Łaptaś (by e-mail dated 11 August 2004). This terse scientific analysis of materials was, however, not sufficient to make any conclusions about the technique of the *proskynetaria* in general, but it may suffice to suggest recommendations for their keeping. However, each piece has to be studied separately.

³⁷ Łaptaś 2004, 1349-1356.

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Pilgrims' Eulogias from the Holy Land in the Hermitage Museum Collection, St Petersburg

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From the first centuries of Christianity, Christian believers were attracted to the places where Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the apostles and the saints had lived – places glorified as miraculous. When visiting them, the people became acquainted with the realia of the events described in the Bible and their imagination made the holy story visible and tangible, as if the people themselves had been witnesses of the sacred events of long ago. The pilgrims often recorded their journeys and emotional impressions, thus initiating a special genre of pilgrims' literature. It was only natural that they wished to bring home with them some material evidence to confirm their pilgrimage and remind themselves of the emotional impact experienced. This was the origin of pilgrims' souvenirs, which were called eulogias, from the Greek word meaning 'the act of blessing'. Two types of eulogias are distinguished: the primary ones, i.e. fragments or small parts of the sacred relics from the Holy Land, and secondary eulogias, i.e. objects consecrated through contact with sacred objects and holy places¹. Secondary eulogias are, for example, oil from lamps or oiled cloth; consecrated water, sand or dust; flowers and plants. A great number of clay and lead ampullas, clay and bronze lamps, glass flagons, bronze encolpion crosses, small icons of carved stone, and, of course, painted icons and reliquary-boxes were made to satisfy the pilgrims' needs.

There are many different eulogias of Early Christian and Byzantine times kept in churches, museums and private collections. They are to be found in the collections of the Hermitage Museum as well; many of them were on display at the 1998 Hermitage exhibition, 'Christians in the Holy Land'². Few of them are notable for their high artistic merits. As a rule, they were mass-produced objects which are of interest precisely for their historical and cultural or iconographic content³. This holds true of eulogias of the late Ottoman period, which are the subject of this article.

The samples kept in the Hermitage collection today were only given the status of museum exhibits in the 1920s-1930s, when Russian museums were enriched with items transferred from imperial and aristocratic palaces, from churches and monasteries. However, these objects were usually kept in museum store-rooms. If they were ever exhibited, it was to perform an explicitly anti-religious function or to illustrate their function as objects of everyday life. They were never regarded as objects of culture or art. Quite recently, at the end of the 1970s, my colleagues from the Oriental Department of the Hermitage museum actually dismissed carved mother-of-pearl icons as being 'in bad taste'. The project of the exhibition, 'Christians in the Holy Land', where such items were extensively represented, raised objections and was resisted for nearly six years. It is true that the past two decades have somewhat altered the mentality of the Russians, including scholars. Nevertheless, the eulogias of the Modern Time have come up against another negative point: they are all too often regarded as exclusively ecclesiastical objects and are still excluded from historical and cultural contexts, just as in the Soviet period.

The Hermitage possesses most kinds of the Christian eulogias of the eighteenth-twentieth century: carved wooden and mother-of-pearl crosses and icons, rosaries of various materials, icons painted on wood, mother-of-pearl and fish bone, *proskynetarions* on canvas, marble plates with St Constantine's and St Helena's portraits, finger-rings with the Calvary and so on⁴. Many of these items were transferred from the Cathedral of the Winter Palace and from palace churches of other imperial

¹ Mundell Mango 2000, 34-39.

² Christians in the Holy Land 1998; Catalogue Amsterdam 2005.

³ Piatnitsky 1998, 108-117; Piatnitsky 2005, 18-71.

⁴ Afonskie drevnosti 1992, cat. nos 79-104; 1993, cat. nos 157-223, 331, 332; Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. nos 1-56, 69-151, 158-171, 209-221.

residences in St Petersburg. We have found interesting information in nineteenth-century documents on the persons to whom, and the dates on which these holy objects were given to the imperial family. Mother-of-pearl icons, crosses and rosaries were usually brought by pilgrims from Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Since we are speaking about objects from palace churches and the imperial family, it would be reasonable to suppose that these were exclusively gifts from patriarchs, hierarchs of the church and nobility. This would not be the whole truth, however. Surprisingly, most of the mother-of-pearl objects were presented to the tsars by pilgrims from among the common people: peasants, retired soldiers and non-commissioned officers, and members of the lower middle class. These gifts from people of the 'lowest status' and the fact that they were carefully preserved in the palace churches are telling proof of the Russians' piety and of the special reverence they had for pilgrims' eulogias.

Let me cite a few examples. In March 1837, the Winter Palace Cathedral received mother-of-pearl icons, crosses and rosaries from the Jerusalem patriarch, who also sent his portrait⁵. In 1841, the Russian tsar was presented with a mother-of-pearl cross and three wax candles, blessed at the Holy Sepulchre⁶, by the 'retired non-commissioned officer, Kuzma Zharkov', and by a commoner, Nikolai Sanin, with

a candle, a mother-of-pearl icon and a model of the Chapel of the Resurrection⁷. In 1843, three crosses of mother-of-pearl were brought from Jerusalem and presented to the tsar by a soldier's wife, Akulina Solodyannikova⁸, while the retired soldier, Stepan Ivanov, presented a mother-of-pearl cross⁹. In 1846–1853, the Winter Palace Cathedral received candles and mother-of-pearl objects from the Holy Land, presented to the imperial family by the non-commissioned officers, Tikhon Soltykov (1846)¹⁰, Stepan Yakovlev (1852)¹¹ and Matvei Krylov (1853)¹², the rank-and-file Stepan Nikitin from Tobolsk, Siberia (1849)¹³, a Moscow citizen and commoner, Ekaterina Abramova (1850)¹⁴ and the peasant, Pavel Aleksandrov (1852)¹⁵. There were gifts from aristocratic pilgrims, too, such as Princess Sofia Volkonskaya, who presented a rosary, made of the fruit of olive trees growing on the Mount of Olives (1848)¹⁶, and the widow of Lieutenant-General Kavelin, who brought 'a fragment of the Holy Tomb' as a gift from the patriarch of Jerusalem (1852)¹⁷. Thanks to the archival documents and museum items, we can form a clear idea of the migration of pilgrims' eulogias. Regrettably, it is not yet possible to relate all of the archival information to the actual objects preserved. This is a task for future research.

Here I would like to draw attention to two examples disclosing the different quality of carving in mother-of-pearl. The Hermitage collection contains a big mother-of-pearl icon with the Resurrection of Christ in the centre (Pl. 1)¹⁸. It was transferred to the museum from the customs-house in 1991, when an attempt to take it out of Russia illegally was frustrated. Thanks to the Greek inscription on the icon and archival documents, it was possible to ascertain that the icon was brought to Russia in 1910 as a special gift from Damianos, the patriarch of Jerusalem, to Alexei, son of the last Russia tsar, Nicholas II. Inserted in the bottom border of the icon were fragments of the original objects of worship: stone from the Holy Tomb and rock from Mount Golgotha. Their presence makes it necessary to place the mother-of-pearl icon in a different category and regard it as a sacred reliquary icon, and not as an ordinary eulogia¹⁹. Above, the name of the non-commissioned officer, Tikhon Soltykov, was mentioned, known to us from archival documents. In 1846 he presented the Russian tsar with a mother-of-pearl icon (Pl. 2) and cross²⁰. The icon has survived, though it was damaged by time and

⁵ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 83, list 2v.

⁶ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 7, list 16.

⁷ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 8, list 8; RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 83, list 5v.

⁸ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 10, list 11.

⁹ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 10, list 3.

¹⁰ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 83, list 10; RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 13, list 10.

¹¹ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 19, list 13, 61.

¹² RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 20, list 67.

¹³ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 16, list 33.

¹⁴ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 17, list 31.

¹⁵ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 19, list 18.

¹⁶ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 15, list 16.

¹⁷ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 19, list 57.

¹⁸ The State Hermitage Museum, Inv. no. ERRZ – 6366; size: 86.5 × 64.2 × 16 cm.

¹⁹ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. no. 109; In the new publication, this icon was attributed by Irina Uchanova to the craftsman Bishar Issa il Zugubi with his brother Joseph and son Gabriel, see: Piatnitsky et alii 2000, cat. no. R-247 (I. Uchanova).

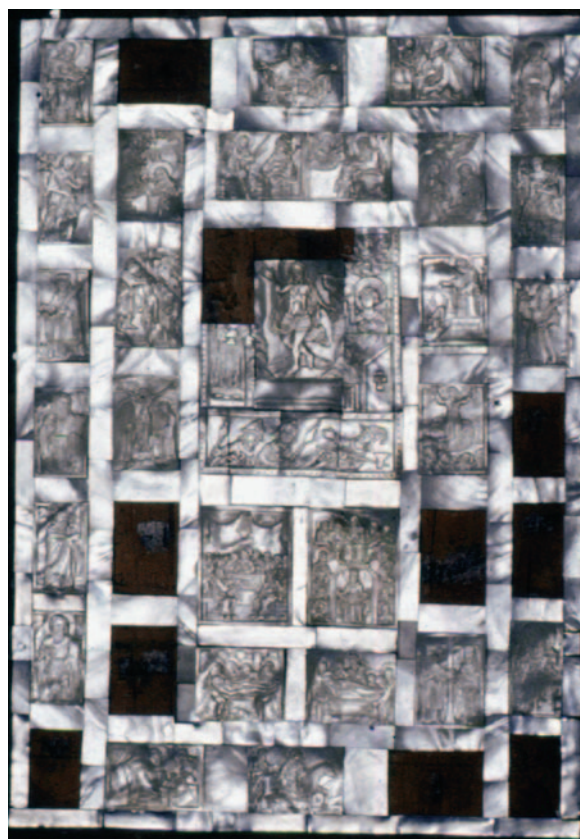
²⁰ RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 13, list 10; RGIA, fond 818, opis' 1, delo 83, list 10.



Pl. 1. Central part of the mother-of-pearl icon,
Resurrection

careless keeping. We do not know where it was kept after the 1917 Russian Revolution, but in 1950, it came into the possession of the Hermitage Museum and it was restored in 1991²¹. The wooden panel had small mother-of-pearl plates with carved holy objects mounted in it. It is noteworthy that there are inscriptions in Arabic on the reverse side of the plates and on the face of the wooden panel. They define the place of each subject in the composition. As they were made at the same time as the icon, the inscriptions confirm that the mother-of-pearl icons were usually produced by Arabic-speaking craftsmen²².

From various sources, we know that the major centres for carved icons of mother-of-pearl were Bethlehem and Jerusalem. This is no accident. Nowadays, when it takes only a few hours to travel from one continent to another, we tend to forget that, until the late nineteenth century, it was very dangerous to travel in the Holy Land. There is much information that pilgrims were often robbed and killed on the roads. There were, therefore, specially guarded pilgrims' caravans, which, as a rule, visited only a few places in the Holy Land. The itinerary always included Jerusalem and its surrounding area, Bethlehem and the Jordan. The two towns



Pl. 2. Mother-of-pearl icon with holy subjects

had all the conditions for the prosperity of pilgrims' souvenirs: master craftsmen, the historical tradition of such production and the sales market. Among the subjects of carved mother-of-pearl objects, two were particularly popular, connected as they were to Jerusalem and Bethlehem: the Resurrection of Christ²³ and the Nativity²⁴. Also popular were the Last Supper²⁵ and the Dormition of the Virgin²⁶,

²¹ The State Hermitage Museum, Inv. no. ERRZ 3111-3139; size: 44.5 × 31.5 × 2.9 cm.

²² Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. no. 111.

²³ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. nos 86, 96-98, 100, 102, 109, 111.

²⁴ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. nos 80-82, 89, 95, 99, 101, 104, 105, 107, 108, 124; Gnutova 2002, Fig. 1. The article by S. Gnutova has some interesting illustrations of the pilgrimage souvenirs from Moscow's museums and private collections, but her text exactly repeats the article by Irina Uchanova 1998, 60-67. Gnutova presents it as her original research.

²⁵ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. nos 87, 92-94, 106-108.

²⁶ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. nos 88, 111.

while the subject of the crosses was, very naturally, the Crucifixion²⁷. Jerusalem has, without doubt, always been the main centre of the eulogia trade. The craftsmen and traders would come specially from Bethlehem and other places to sell their wares, particularly during the Great Feasts, when the town was visited by thousands of pilgrims. In 1835, the Russian traveller and writer, Abraham Norov, described the Passion Week in Jerusalem as follows: 'The whole road ... and the square in front of the Temple were occupied by traders selling rosaries, crosses and mother-of-pearl icons; most of them come from Bethlehem.'²⁸

With the expansion of the pilgrims' movement, which reached its peak in the first decade of the twentieth century, and with the number of places visited increasing, both the assortment of the subjects and the quantity of souvenirs produced increased greatly. The records of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and the Imperial Palestinian Society mention about 10.000-15.000 Russian pilgrims to the Holy Land every year in the 1900s²⁹. One of them, Ivan Yuvachev, wrote in his book about the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre: 'It would be impossible to visit Bethlehem without calling at a shop of local products of mother-of-pearl. Bethlehem's carved... objects of piety are well-known in Russia, for they are so dear to the Christians.'³⁰ Pilgrims' eulogias actually became items of import and were brought in large quantities to important Russian monasteries, as is confirmed by the financial documents of the Lavra of St Sergius near Moscow, the Kievan Pechersky Monastery, Pochaevsky Lavra in Ukraine and others³¹.

This increase in the number of pilgrims to the Holy Land and in the demand for eulogias had some negative effects as well. First, the quality and

artistic standard of the eulogias fell. Second, as a result of imports of souvenirs from the Holy Land, there was an influx to Russia of icons with iconography different from that traditional for Russia. As a rule, the objects from the Holy Land reproduced Western models. The prototype was of little significance to the Arab carvers and Melchite icon-painters; they reproduced Catholic pictures and Western engravings, as well as Byzantine icons. However, to the Russians, an icon brought from Jerusalem was blessed by the sacredness of the place, though its iconographic difference frequently confused the minds of ordinary Russian pilgrims. As is known from classical Russian literature, when a common Russian man began 'to philosophise', it meant great misfortunes for his own soul and for Russian society. The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, which existed in Jerusalem from 1849³², the Orthodox Palestinian Society³³ and the Committee for Guardianship of Russian Icon-Painting³⁴ were concerned about this problem and took measures to raise the standard of pilgrims' souvenirs. In the 1900s the Orthodox Palestinian Society opened shops for pilgrims in Jerusalem which sold icons painted in the Russian monasteries of the Holy Land, and the best icons made by Melkite artists, as well as icons specially brought from Mount Athos and icon workshops in Russia. The Palestinian Society commissioned icons for these shops, both at Mount Athos and in Russia, with specifically Palestinian subjects. It was realized, of course, that icons with a local colour would be more attractive to pilgrims than icons with traditional iconography.

Sometimes, local colour was introduced in their style and for this purpose, samples of the Melkites' painting were especially sent to Mstiora or to Kholui in Russia and to the *skete* of St Andrew in Mount Athos. However, these new Russian shops found it hard to compete with the little Arab and Jewish shops in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, where the products, though poorer in quality, were cheaper and more attractive to the pilgrims because of their motley oriental brightness and specifically local subjects³⁵. The Committee and the Palestinian Society therefore decided to give special attention to preserving the local tradition of painting icons on unusual 'historical materials'. As was recommended by the famous Russian scholar Alexei Dmitrievsky in his reports of 1906 and 1908, 'The icon with the Resurrection will be readily bought if it is painted on marble, olive wood or cypress, the

²⁷ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. nos 78, 79, 112-123, 129.

²⁸ Norov 1854, 132.

²⁹ Dmitrievskij 1904, 95.

³⁰ Juvačev 1904, 264.

³¹ Gnutova 2002, 306-307.

³² Dmitrievskij 1904, 95-148; Dmitrievskij 1905, 329-361; Dmitrievskij 1907, 1-120.

³³ Dmitrievskij 1907, 120-332; Meščerskaja/Juzbašjan 1986, 3-9.

³⁴ Ikonopisnyj sbornik 1906, 5-93; Ikonopisnyj sbornik 1908, 15-63; Ikonopisnyj sbornik 1909, 51-86.

³⁵ Dmitrievskij 1907/a, 284-287; Dmitrievskij 1908, 6-9; Ikonopisnyj sbornik 1908, 50-53.



Pl. 3. *Icon on fish bone: Baptism of Christ with the Prophets David and Daniel*

Trinity as the Hospitality of Abraham with Three Angels near the Mamre Oak only on oak wood, the Mount of Temptation or the Forty Days' Mount on simple stone or stone taken from the top of the above mountain and, if necessary, on olive wood, the Baptism of Christ on a wide pebble stone from the Jordan or on a fish from the Sea of Tiberius, with a broad body, the Burning Bush on rock, the Dormition of the Virgin on wood, as a shroud, with the Virgin depicted in accordance with the Jewish funeral rite wrapped in shrouds, etc.³⁶.

In the Hermitage collection, there are five icons painted on fish bone, as Dmitrievsky recommended. They are, in fact, painted on the forehead part of the fish heads, first cleaned, polished and covered with gesso. The subjects of three icons are connected with the local holy places: the Baptism of Christ with the Prophets David and Daniel (32 × 17 cm;

Pl. 3), the Miraculous Draught of Fishes in Lake Gennesaret (8.5 × 5 cm; Pl. 4), and the Blessing of the Loaves, the Miraculous Draught of Fishes, Christ Walking upon the Water (22.5 × 13.5 cm; Pl. 5)³⁷. The other two icons depict full-length figures of saints: St Ida (18 × 10 cm; Pl. 6) and St Nicholas the Miracle-Worker (18.5 × 11.5 cm; Pl. 7). Neither are the two subjects accidental: St Ida was particularly popular in Jerusalem, where her cult was venerated³⁸, while Myra in Lycia, where St Nicholas was once bishop, was on the pilgrims' way to the Holy Land. The Slavonic inscriptions on the five icons point to the nationality of the artists. Most probably, these works were executed in one of the Russian Holy Land convents, in the workshops founded in the 1900s to raise the standard of icon-painting in the Holy Land. The iconography of the Baptism of Christ, however, is identical to that of the Greek monuments, or, for example, a Greek icon on fish bone that we saw in the Monastery of St John the Baptist near Iraklion in Crete³⁹. The Russian workshop in the Holy Land continued to adopt and develop the traditions of Syrian and Palestinian painting, as can be seen in their style. Slavonic artists impart a folklore character to the images, with their typically puffy faces and an ingenious artlessness of execution.

Very similar in style is the icon representing the Nativity of Christ (35 × 28.5 × 2 cm; 75 × 42 cm in frame; Pl. 8), which also has Slavonic inscriptions⁴⁰. It is set in a magnificent carved wooden frame, where the compositional complexity of the ornamental design competes with the effect of the golden flowers and fruit against the blue colouring and the flickers of the foil lining. The wooden carving is executed in a technique reminiscent of traditional Palestinian carving in mother-of-pearl. The iconography of this icon replicates the Melkite and Greek Palestinian prototypes, such as the icon of the

³⁶ Dmitrievskij 1907/a, 283-284; Dmitrievskij 1908, 5-6.

³⁷ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. nos 167-171; Piatnitsky 1996, 44-46; Piatnitsky 1997, 38-41.

³⁸ LCI, Band 6, 563-566.

³⁹ Postcard with the Baptism of Christ on fish bone, bought in the monastery; see also two fish head icons with the Baptism of Christ in Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun, Egypt: Innemée 1995, 521-522, Fig. 1; Immerzeel 1997, 28, Fig. 10.

⁴⁰ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. no. 166; Piatnitsky 1996, 44-46.



Pl. 4. Icon on fish bone: Miraculous Catch of Fishes



Pl. 6. Icon on fish bone: St Ida



*Pl. 5. Icon on fish bone: Blessing of the Loaves,
Miraculous Catch of Fishes,
Christ Walking upon the Water*



*Pl. 7. Icon on fish bone:
St Nicholas the Miracle-Worker*



Pl. 8. Icon: Nativity



Pl. 9. Icon painted on mother-of-pearl shell:
Transfiguration



Pl. 10. Icon painted on mother-of-pearl shell: *St Sergius*

early nineteenth-century artist, Theodosius Nicolaos, from Jerusalem, the icon of Mikhail Mhanna al-Qudsi in the Saida Church of 1868, or an engraving by Joannis Constantinos Kaldes of 1867. Specifically local and Palestinian in character is the Massacre of the Innocents, at the bottom of the Hermitage icon. The same local colour can be seen in the slightly puffy faces, the crudely narrative character and the excessively decorative quality of the work. The polychrome painting with profuse gold glitter and the radiance of coloured lakes, set in a luxurious frame, has a strong emotional impact and must have stimulated the desire to make a journey to the Holy Land. A similar icon of the Nativity with Slavonic inscriptions was published by Mat Immerzeel in the exhibition catalogue *Syrian Icons* in 1997⁴¹.

Icons were also made in the Jerusalem branch of the Russian St Sergius Lavra, where, in my opinion, the icons of the Transfiguration (9.5 × 10 cm; Pl. 9) and St Sergius (6 × 5 cm; Pl. 10) were painted on mother-of-pearl shells, which are now kept in the Hermitage⁴². They were not only to remind the pilgrims of the biblical sacred relicts but also to bind them spiritually to the distant homeland. It was as if St Sergius, the Great Russian ascetic, took the pilgrims under his protection: it must have been comforting and touching for them to see St Sergius' face and to feel their bond with Russia amid the splendour of the sultry Orient. In the eyes of a pilgrim, such icons of Russian saints possessed additional value and attraction, since they were acquired in a holy place and, as a rule, consecrated at the Holy Sepulchre, in Gethsemane or in the Jordan.

Among the pilgrims' eulogias in the Hermitage collection, there are traditional Melkite representations. The oldest one, of 1712, is an *epithaphion*, a shroud with the Entombment (110 × 93 cm; Pl. 11), from the Balamand Monastery near Tripoli⁴³. The inscription says that the shroud was made by Wustin, daughter of Hanna in 1712 at the commission of Patriarch Cyril, who presented it to the Balamand Monastery, one of the largest centres of Melkite and Syrian culture. The embroiderer, Wustin, evidently copied a Greek sixteenth/seventeenth-century prototype, which is apparent in the central part, but introduced some local details – flowers, stars and a fine inscription in Arabic – while giving typically oriental features to the angels'

⁴¹ Immerzeel 1997, cat. no. 15.

⁴² Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. nos 142, 143.

⁴³ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. no. 161; Piatnitsky 1996, 44–46.



Pl. 11. *Epitaphion*; 1712

faces. There are usually two stages in embroidery: first, the artist puts on the design and then the embroiderers apply silk, silver and gilt threads. Whereas in Russia this was exclusively women's work, in the Christian orient this work was mainly done by men. Therefore it is all the more interesting for us to read that the shroud was made by 'Hanna's daughter'. She must only have done the embroidery of the design, outlined by a highly skilled artist. Although 'Hanna' is a very common name in the East, it is tempting to relate it to the famous painter, Hanna al-Qudsi, who was active in Tripoli in the first third of the eighteenth century⁴⁴.

There is a fine icon in the Hermitage, signed by Hanna al-Qudsi: it contains three separate subjects

combined on one wood panel (38.8 × 27.6 × 2 cm; Pl. 12). At the top is the Virgin Hodegetria with archangels; below are the Miracle of St George and St Thecla⁴⁵. The pictures are provided with parallel Greek and Arabic inscriptions, with the names of the saints and the subjects, the master's signature in Arabic and the inscription in Arabic: 'Remember, O Lord, in your prayer your servant Musa, son of Hanna.' The icon must have been donated to the church for prayer for the dead, which is confirmed by other, later inscriptions of the same type.

⁴⁴ Χατζηδακίς, Δρακοπούλου 1997, 455-456.

⁴⁵ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. no. 162; Piatnitsky 1993, cat. no. 331; Piatnitsky 1996, 44-46.



Pl. 12. Icon: Virgin Hodegetria, Miracle of St George and St Thecla; Hanna al-Qudsi

The composition of the icon created by Master Hanna is highly interesting. On the one hand, the principle of heavenly hierarchy is very strictly observed: the Virgin and Child are placed at the top, with a holy warrior and a martyr at the bottom. On the other hand, the choice of the personages is unusual: Master Hanna turned to three renowned sacred relics kept in the three patriarchal monasteries of the Antioch patriarchate. They are the Monastery of St George Hozevite, St Thecla's in Ma'alula and the Monastery of the Nativity of the Virgin at Saydnaya, with the famous miracle-working icon of the Virgin. The three monasteries and their holy relics were venerated, not only by the Orthodox Christians, but also by the Muslims and even by the local, then savage, tribes.

The Hermitage icon by Hanna al-Qudsi is one of the most classical and austere works by this master, where unity of style is strictly observed and the master's professional skills and the high standard of his art are easily apparent. He faithfully follows the traditions of old Greek icon-painting and it is only the heightened ornamentation and, in particular, the abundance of a bright, distinctly local, red that point to the icon being a work from the Syrian and Palestinian regions. The Hermitage icon representing St Nicholas the Miracle-Worker Enthroned (30.8 × 22.2 × 2.1 cm; Pl. 13)⁴⁶, should be viewed as representing the Graecophyle trend in Melkite painting. The fragmented inscription on the reverse side mentions a certain Pavlos, brother of Hanna. It is possible that this man was no relation of the family of the painter Hanna al-Qudsi, but the artistic features of the icon are related to the same style in Melkite painting. The icon comes from the palace of the Counts Shuvalov in St Petersburg. It is a typical example of a pilgrims' eulogia, brought from the Holy Land and kept in the household. The Melkite origins of the artist are testified by the Arabic text in the opened book in St Nicholas' hands, the oriental type of the faces of the Virgin, Christ and St Nicholas himself, as well as by the fact that it is excessively overloaded with decorative elements (the ornamentation in the margins, the clothing and even the white lines in the hair and beard of the saint). The Hermitage icon was most likely created not later than the eighteenth century.

Another style, more popular and primitive, is represented by the eighteenth-century icon, rendering Christ Pantocrator, from Aleppo (25 × 19.3 × 2 cm;

Pl. 14)⁴⁷. It was the central part of a small *epistilion* with the *Deisis*. The miniature size of the icon suggests that it was intended for a small church or chapel. The contrasting local colours make the icon particularly festive and decorative. Nothing here resembles the Greek prototypes. Everything is highly individual and original. The red tunic of Christ is tied at the waist by a white scarf, exactly as was done by the local inhabitants. The skin of Christ's hands and face is greyish, dark-complexioned, as if burnt by the hot southern sun. The facial features are almost ethnographic in character. Recently, an interesting hypothesis was made that the icon was made by a Ukrainian, not an Arab, because it is a known fact that Hetman Mazepa had contacts with Aleppo and the icon does resemble works by Ukrainian artists⁴⁸. I believe, however, that these analogies are due to the primitiveness of the painting, which is characteristic of all minor local art-schools.

The late eighteenth-century icon representing the Exaltation of the Cross (37.8 × 28.7 × 2.6 cm; Pl. 15) was also brought from Jerusalem as a pilgrims' eulogia⁴⁹. Iconographically, it is directly linked to the local Jerusalem tradition. It depicts a special episode of liturgy at the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, celebrated in the Jerusalem Temple on 14 September. The artist reproduced the ceremony fairly accurately, as can be seen on comparison of the icon with descriptions of the feast made by nineteenth-century travellers⁵⁰.

Drawing upon the traditional iconographic scheme, the artist enriched it with details borrowed from the actual ceremonial. Thus, to stress that the scene is laid precisely in the Jerusalem Temple, he makes the characteristics of this temple prominent: the complicated system of the sanctuaries, connected by staircases, arcades, galleries and passages; the variety and richness of the marble columns and capitals; the numerous hanging lamps and censers. A real

⁴⁶ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. no. 160; Piatnitsky 1996, 44-46.

⁴⁷ Christians in the Holy Land, 1998, cat. no. 164; Piatnitsky 1993, cat. no. 332; Piatnitsky 1996, 44-46.

⁴⁸ Putsko 205, 202-211.

⁴⁹ Donated by the Russian nun, Vera Sapukhina, to Vasily Mikhailovsky, the protopresbyter of the Ascension Church, St Petersburg; Christians in the Holy Land, 1998, cat. no. 163; Piatnitsky 1996, 44-46.

⁵⁰ Piatnitsky 1999, 61-64.



Pl. 13. Icon: St Nicholas the Miracle-Worker Enthroned



Pl. 14. Icon: Christ Pantocrator

detail in the Hermitage icon is the representation of the Gold Cross, exalted by the patriarch. Its appearance coincides with the cross described by travellers: a golden, four-pointed cross with a cross-shaped intersection in the centre, fixed on a pyramidal base and decorated with pearls; but, most importantly, there are nine small parts of the True Cross mounted in it. All this is clearly seen in the icon. Only St Helena is represented in the composition, which must point to the scene of action – the Jerusalem Temple – and to the historical nature of the iconographic scheme, since the Constantinople tradition demanded representation, both of St Constantine and St Helena. The Arabic inscriptions, the ethnic type of the personages portrayed and the highly decorative quality leave no doubt as to the origins of the artist in the Melkite school of painting. The motley mixture of colours with abundance of gold and the profusion of ornamental plants and flowers, generously scattered like a carpet over the architectural details, must have fully corresponded to the idea of ‘oriental taste’ and produced a great impression on the pilgrims. It was precisely this aspect of such icons that appealed to them. The pilgrims



Pl. 15. Icon: Exaltation of the Cross



Pl. 16. *Proskynetarion*; 1876

preferred works of local artists for their originality of subjects and for the sake of enlivening in their memory, on their return home, the sacred biblical objects they had seen.

Finally, undoubtedly a pilgrims' souvenir is a painting on canvas representing the Topography of Palestine, or *proskynetarion* (72.5 × 93 cm; Pl. 16)⁵¹. Rolled up, such paintings took little space and were brought to the remotest corners of the Orthodox world. The very name, 'The Topography of Palestine', gives a clear idea of the image's message: to present in one composition all the main holy places of the region, to remind one of the events from the Old and New Testaments which took place there. The centre of *proskynetarion*-making was, naturally, Jerusalem. Few places in the Orthodox world, however distant, had no Topography of Palestine in their churches. No complete index has yet been made, but, judging by the publications and the

conference in Hernen Castle on September, 11, 2004, it is quite a realistic task⁵².

Some of the earliest information on *proskynetaria* in Russia comes from the *Diary* of Paul of Aleppo, dating from the second half of the seventeenth century. When visiting the Trinity Lavra of St Sergius near Moscow in 1655, he noted in the Trinity Cathedral of the monastery 'large icons striking the mind with the art of execution: all of Jerusalem with all the churches, monasteries, and holy places inside and outside it, the representation of the entire Mount of Zion and Mount Athos'⁵³. They have not survived and may have been engravings.

⁵¹ Christians in the Holy Land 1998, cat. no. 165; Piatnitsky 1996, 44-46.

⁵² Immerzeel 1999, 53-62; Immerzeel/Deluga/Łaptaś 2005; Deluga 1997/1998, 370-377; Łaptaś 2004; Piatnitsky 2001, 82-113.

⁵³ Paul of Aleppo 1898, 30.

As for the composition, most *proskynetarions* have a common structure: in the centre is the representation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in section with all its sanctuaries. Grouped around it are scenes on holy or historical subjects, figures of saints and martyrs. Some of these border scenes contain rare subjects, based on local Jerusalem folklore or apocryphal texts. The Hermitage *proskynetarion* is dated 1876 and was analysed in detail in an article by the present author, which was published in the Hermitage volume of articles devoted to the 2001 Byzantine congress in Paris⁵⁴. It is my opinion, however, that *proskynetarions* are works which can be studied limitlessly and each study will reveal new aspects.

Even these few examples show how complicated, controversial, and subject to opposing influences the development of Syrian and Palestinian painting was; how great the role was of the biblical region itself, and of the different religious denominations, political events and the missionaries' activities; where the economic factor was always taken into account, often prevailing over the considerations of taste and artistic quality. The art of the Holy Land, with its biblical specificity, has not only exerted influence on the religious culture of many countries but has, in its turn, been active in absorbing and re-shaping various elements of these cultures. The constant living whirlpool of artistic trends has created that specific image of the culture of the Holy Land which has always attracted attention to it.

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⁵⁴ Piatnitsky 2001, 82-113.

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Syrian Orthodox Attitudes to the Pilgrimage to Jerusalem

Herman TEULE

INTRODUCTION

In the interesting and well documented study on the history of the monasteries and churches of Mardin and surroundings published by the Syrian Orthodox priest, Gabriel Akyüz, one finds a picture of a *proskynetarion*, which some pious Syrian Orthodox pilgrims had brought to their home city as a souvenir of their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This *proskynetarion* now hangs on the wall of the venerable Church of Mart Šmuni in the outskirts of Mardin¹. Like the Christians of the other oriental and Eastern churches, the Syrian Orthodox were great supporters of a pilgrimage to the Holy City. In their case, the journey was much facilitated by the presence of some infrastructure in Jerusalem, where they could find shelter in their own monasteries. This popularity is confirmed by an Arabic inscription, which commemorates the renovation of St Mark's Monastery and states that, in this monastery, 'renowned among the Syrians in Jerusalem the Holy, to which people flock from every region and (from all) countries ... new monks' cells and courtyards and an *iwān* were built, a lodging (*manzīl*) for visitors, be they spiritual brothers or monks.'² Apparently, St Mark's Monastery attracted many Jacobite visitors in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the date of this inscription (1833). Another inscription (in Karshūnī) from this period informs us that important renovation works in the same monastery were financed by the believers in Syria, an indication that the maintenance of a good infrastructure in Jerusalem was important to them³. Still another one, also in Karshūnī, suggests a great number of visitors from Syria in the middle of the nineteenth century and refers to *lummāt*, travelling parties, arriving at the monastery⁴. Hopefully, these *lummāt* were more than just travelling parties or tourists, but also included the spiritual brothers of the previous inscription. From the same inscriptions it appears that in this period also many Jacobite pilgrims from India visited the Holy City.

When we go somewhat back in history, we have much less evidence about the journey to Jerusalem, although again the infrastructure in Jerusalem suggests a virtually permanent presence of Jacobite pilgrims⁵. This is confirmed by the popularity of the honorific title *al-maqdisī*, *maqdsōyō* or *muqsī* which was given, in Arabic, Syriac or Ṭurōyō, to West Syrian pilgrims to Jerusalem especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, possibly in imitation of the Muslim title *ḥajjī*⁶. For the end of the fifteenth century, we should mention the pilgrimage of some people from the village of Beth Sbirino in Tur 'Abdin. An elaborate description of this long and difficult journey is given in the appendix to Gregory Bar 'Ebrōyō's *Chronicon civile*⁷. This volume devoted to the study of presents brought from Jerusalem contains one interesting detail: when travelling back through Syria to their home village, the pilgrims were, according to the chronicler, ill-treated by the Lord of the city of Gargar and deprived of their 'girdles, crosses (*zunnorē waṣlibē*) and other provisions'. These girdles were not, as one translator seems to suggest, their personal belts, but rather, together with the crosses, presents which they had taken from Jerusalem to distribute to the people of their village.

Apart from the infrastructure in Jerusalem we do not have much information about the practical details of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the nineteenth century. I would, therefore, like to discuss a Syrian Orthodox text on the pilgrimage to

¹ Akyüz 1998, 69.

² Palmer/van Gelder 1994, 40 and 41.

³ Palmer/van Gelder 1994, 45: the Metropolitan of Edessa undertook these renovations from his own money and that of the believers in Syria.

⁴ Palmer/van Gelder 1994, 47-48.

⁵ Cf. Palmer 1991; Palmer 1992.

⁶ Kaufhold 1991, 49-53.

⁷ Wallis Budge 1932 (reprint 1976), I-ii (translation) and fol. 200r, col 2-201r; cf. Palmer 1991, 21-24.

Jerusalem, which was composed as early as in the thirteenth century, but, judging from the number of manuscripts copied in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, must have been extremely popular in the period under discussion. The original language was Syriac, but its popularity is also shown by the fact that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at least three different translations were made into Arabic, mainly in the region of Damascus, where the Syrian Orthodox no longer understood Syriac. We have seen that the Jerusalem pilgrimage was especially popular among the Christians from Syria.

In order to have a better understanding of the mentality and even the spirituality of the Syrian Orthodox pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it seems worthwhile to investigate this text more closely. It is found in the *Ethicon* a well-known book by Gregory Bar 'Ebrōyō (b al-'Ibrī), which can best be characterized as a work on spirituality rather than on ethics, as the title suggests. It was written not only for monks and priests – and this makes it unique and explains its popularity –, but also for laymen, 'ōlmōyē, secular people living in the world. It is divided into four parts. The first *memrō* deals with a number of devotional practices such as prayer, singing, fasting, spiritual retreat, etc. The ninth and last chapter of this *memrō* is devoted to the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the last but one to travelling in general⁸.

THE PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM IN BARHEBRAEUS' *ETHICON*

The author begins this chapter with a discussion whether the pilgrimage to the Holy City is allowed and not detrimental to spiritual life. This should not surprise us. In the spiritual literature written by the Syrians we hardly find any reference to the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. One should certainly not think that great numbers of monks and ascetics crowded together towards the Holy City. The statement of Father Fiey⁹ that one cannot be a genuine monk as

long as one has not performed the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, seems exaggerated and is certainly not corroborated by what we find in the literary sources. To give an example: we are relatively well-informed about the ascetical practices of the West Syrian monks, many collections of ascetic rules have been preserved, with detailed descriptions of the life of a monk, inside and outside a monastery, but no allusion can be found to the pilgrimage to Jerusalem¹⁰. Apparently, the journey to the Holy City was not important enough to deserve a place in the different sets of monastic rules. The same holds true for the chronicles of monasteries or the juridical compilations. The reason is simple and is given by Bar 'Ebrōyō, who approvingly quotes a letter written by some anonymous solitary from the East and addressed to one of his colleagues: 'Everyone tries hard to go to Jerusalem on high; how could you leave for Jerusalem on earth? Such a matter would not be the desire of a watchful mind Stay therefore in your cell and strive to abide in your inner self ..., for you are Jerusalem yourself!'¹¹.

But this is not all. Bar 'Ebrōyō, a man of great pastoral experience – this is exactly why he wrote his *Book of Ethics* –, recognizes that not all believers are up to this 'sublime opinion', as he puts it, of monks and ascetics. Therefore, one should not reject the practice of many of them, the *bnay Qyōmō*, the covenanters, or secular people, who leave for Jerusalem in order to be blessed by their visit to the Lord's Sepulchre or the other Holy Places. For Bar 'Ebrōyō, a general disapproval of the pilgrimage would be all the more misplaced, since one has to recognize that many people really benefit from their journey to Jerusalem and grow in ardour for good works.

He therefore composes a number of *qōnune*, rules, which indicate the best conditions for the journey.

The first is that, before leaving, the pilgrim should repent of what he has done wrong. If there remain affairs to be settled with the people who stay behind, he should do so. He should leave for Jerusalem without ulterior motives, such as selling or buying goods, for, with a word-play in Syriac, worldly ('ōlmōnōyō) trade is an impediment to eternal ('ōlmīnōyō) commerce. The pilgrim should take with him enough honestly earned money; if possible he should think of taking something extra in order to help less privileged travellers.

⁸ For a discussion of the different Arabic versions, see *Ethicon* (transl.), XIII-XVII. For the number of Syriac mss of the 18th and 19th cent, see *Ethicon* (text), V-XXII and H. Takahashi in the bibliographical appendix to his dissertation (Takahashi 2002, 59*-62*).

⁹ Fiey 1969, 126.

¹⁰ Cf. Teule 1994.

¹¹ *Ethicon*, 122 (transl.: 104).

A number of canons are devoted to the inner attitude of the pilgrim. His act of devotion must be a conscious one and he must be aware of the religious reasons of his pilgrimage: 'In his heart, the (pilgrim) must reflect on where he is going and to Whom and for what reason.'¹²

This inner disposition should become visible in his behaviour towards others, being friendly, humble, without much talking. If possible, one should travel on foot, since riding an animal is a sign of wealth and luxury. In the same way, his clothing should be simple and not meant to distinguish himself from the other pilgrims.

A next point is the best moment for the pilgrimage. It is obvious that the Syrian Orthodox also tried to be in Jerusalem during Holy Week and at Easter. Bar 'Ebrōyō even recommends special clothes for the pilgrims who are in Jerusalem during this period: white cotton for the seculars, and, quite astonishingly, white clothes of pure wool if the pilgrim happens to be a monk. I shall come back to this prescription later.

Of course, prayer is an important aspect of the pilgrimage. Different psalms are to be recited during the journey or when the pilgrim enters the Holy City. During his visit to the Sanctuary – the Syriac has *hayklō* –, apparently the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he must recite the prayer which is normally said by a priest when he prepares himself to enter the sanctuary of a church in order to celebrate the Eucharist: 'into your house, O God, have I entered and before your altar have I worshipped, O heavenly King, forgive me all my sins', an original application of a well-known liturgical prayer.

The last section of this chapter is devoted to the manner in which a pilgrim should meditate at the Holy Places. This beautiful text reveals a deep spiritual attitude and deserves to be quoted in full:

When you walk at the Holy Places, where our Lord completed his economy in the flesh, you must not investigate them carelessly, nor just be an external observer. Meditate rather with your intellect as if you were one of the observers and servants of the Word and the Gospel itself. Wherever you come, at any holy place, think as if you were a partaker of the particular event that happened there. In Bethlehem, at the grotto, present gifts together with the magi; when you are in the temple, like old Simeon, receive him in your arms, take him up and kiss him and inhale his odour that gives life to everything. Wash you his feet

too, like Mary Magdelene, cry out Hosanna in the Highest, when like the children you go through the streets of Jerusalem, and (again with a word-play in Syriac) drink (aštī) with him vinegar, so that you may rejoice at the wedding banquet (maštutō), die with him so that, like him, you will be raised at his resurrection.

It is one of the strongest texts on the spiritual meaning of the journey to Jerusalem, making it a real pilgrimage rather than merely the tourist journey of the travelling parties mentioned above.

ISLAMIC INFLUENCES

When reading these different prescriptions and injunctions, of course, one is inclined to ask after their origin. Partly, one recognizes echoes of what can be found in the writings of the Fathers. For instance, the last paragraph on the synchronic approach of the great events of the past bear some resemblance to some passages from Gregory of Nazianzus' homily 38 (*Eis ta Theofania*). But most material is new when compared with the former tradition. In his translation of Bar 'Ebrōyō's *Book of the Dove*, A. Wensinck has drawn the attention to the great influence of the Islamic scholar Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī on the spiritual and mystical thinking of Bar 'Ebrōyō¹³. This influence is also felt in the *Ethicon*¹⁴. As a matter of fact, many of the prescriptions concerning the Jerusalem pilgrimage are Christian adaptations of injunctions and spiritual rules formulated by al-Ghazālī in his *kitāb asrār al-Ḥajj*, the Book of the Mysteries of the Ḥajj¹⁵. One should even consider the possibility that the idea of the promotion of the Jerusalem pilgrimage as an important act of devotion among Syrian Christian lay people was borrowed from the world of Islam, since the Jacobite Church with its strong emphasis on the ascetical and monastic tradition was not particularly interested in the spiritual life of secular people.

The Muslim spiritual world can be viewed on three different levels. Firstly, the attitude towards

¹² *Ethicon*, 126 (transl.: 107).

¹³ Wensinck 1919. For an overview of Barhebraeus and his attitude to the world of Islam, see Teule 2003, 21-43.

¹⁴ *Ethicon* (translation), appendix I, 112-145.

¹⁵ This work belongs to al-Ghazālī's magnum opus, the *Ihyā' ulūm al-dīn* (Cairo, A.H. 1337), vol. I, 214-244.

the pilgrimage: Bar 'Ebrōyō's emphasis on the right inner disposition resembles the Muslim concept of *niyya*, the right intention to perform a religious act¹⁶. In the same way, the manner of meditation at the Holy Places, which the pilgrim should approach as if he were a witness of what happened there in the time of Christ and the Apostles, may be compared to the attitude of the Mecca pilgrim when visiting the tomb of Muḥammad in Medīna: 'meet him being dead as if you meet him alive.'¹⁷ On this level, Bar 'Ebrōyō and Ghazālī meet each other in their spiritual conception of devotional practices, but the resemblance is too general to speak of direct Muslim influence on Bar 'Ebrōyō. This is different, however, on the second level, the spiritual rules which are to be observed before and during the pilgrimage, where Bar 'Ebrōyō summarizes a number of injunctions found in the work of al-Ghazālī. The fact that Bar 'Ebrōyō adapts the Muslim rules to Christian practice shows that there is no friction between the Muslim background of these rules and their Christian implementation. On the third level, that of practical prescriptions, Bar 'Ebrōyō is innovative and formulates some really new canons. The most obvious example is the injunction that the Jerusalem pilgrims, including the monks, should wear white clothes. Despite some biblical quotations, Bar 'Ebrōyō introduces an unambiguously Muslim practice, namely the adoption of the state of *iḥrām* (consecration) during the Mecca pilgrimage. Traditionally, the colour of the garment of the West Syrian monks, sometimes called *abilē*, mourners, was black. I do not know whether in later times this prescription was ever put into practice. Perhaps only in the Church of the Resurrection, but this is not confirmed by literary sources.

GIFTS AND PRESENTS

The Hernen symposium was convened to study some physical material pertaining to the Jerusalem pilgrimage. Our text in the *Ethicon* deals with many aspects of the spirituality of the Jerusalem Pilgrimage but remains silent on the practice of buying souvenirs. The story of the pilgrims from Beth

Sbirinō or the *proskynetarion* in the Church of Mart Šmuni in Mardin suggests that not all Jacobites could resist this temptation. This is confirmed by another chapter in the *Ethicon*, which deals with *aksnōyutō*, expatriation for religious purposes: making yourself a foreigner to everything in the world¹⁸. Here one also finds detailed prescriptions with many quotations from the writings of the great ascetical authorities within the Jacobite tradition, in particular Evagrius of Pontus, whose works were read by all Jacobite ascetics, John of Dalyata and Isaac of Niniveh. In the section 'on the material rules of travellers on the roads' Bar 'Ebrōyō exhorts the returning *aksnōyē* not to forget to bring some presents for the relatives who stayed behind. He even indicates which ones: biscuits, raisins, combs, *belts* and needles, and, if the journey was to Jerusalem, small *crucifixes* in mother-of-pearl.

CONCLUSION

By way of a conclusion I should like to mention three points. Firstly, on account of its popularity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the text of the *Ethicon* is relevant for the subject studied at the Hernen symposium. However, it is difficult to say to what extent the recommendations or rules were put into practice.

Secondly, Bar 'Ebrōyō's work and the influence of the Muslim *ḥajj* upgraded the practice of the Jerusalem pilgrimage to an event of great spiritual and social importance.

Thirdly, despite some allusions to monks in the *Ethicon*, Bar 'Ebrōyō considered the Jerusalem Pilgrimage essentially as a devotion intended for lay people. This is apparent from the fact that he does not mention the pilgrimage in his *Book of the Dove*, which is a selection of spiritual texts taken from the *Ethicon*, but of relevance only for *iḥidōyē*, solitaries and monks. These people should stay in their cells. From the wall inscriptions described by Palmer we know that this recommendation was not always put into practice.

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¹⁶ A. Wensinck, art. 'Niyya', EI² VIII, 66-67. Ghazālī even states that devotional acts ('ibādāt) without *niyya* are not valid.

¹⁷ Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'* I, 244.

¹⁸ *Ethicon*, 110-120 (transl.: 95-103).

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Painters, Paintings and Pilgrims in Medieval Jerusalem: Some Witnesses from East and West

Krijnie CIGGAAR

*'Des ymages trueve la rue
Ymages voit sus et jus maintes'*¹

Proskynetaria, as discussed during the symposium in Hernen Castle in September 2004, i.e. paintings with the various *loci sacri* in and around Jerusalem, are not attested in Byzantine sources. This is no proof that they did not exist in Byzantine times and it may be useful to examine the term *προσκυνητήριον* (*proskynetarion*) in a Byzantine context.

The *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* gives a lemma on the term *proskynetarion* and defines it as 'a place of worship'. The term is not often attested in Byzantine source material. Theophanes, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos and Niketas Byzantios are the only authors to have used the word. They refer to the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem which was converted into a mosque by the Arabs and became a *proskynetarion*, a place of worship and of prayer for the Muslims. According to the authors of the lemma, the word thus acquired a negative connotation. The Byzantines did not like the idea of the Temple of Jerusalem having been converted into a mosque, but this does not necessarily imply that the Greek word had acquired a pejorative meaning. The verb *προσκυνέω* (to adore, to venerate), however, was so generally used that a derivative noun could hardly develop with a negative sense². The Dictionary also discusses two post-Byzantine meanings of the word. From the sixteenth century onwards the word was used for travel guides to Sinai and Jerusalem, and in modern times the term should designate the icon of the patron saint of a church. Such an icon occupied a prominent place in a church or chapel³.

Does this mean that *proskynetaria*, multi-scene or multi-image paintings or embroideries representing the Holy Places came out of the blue? From old times Christ, who had lived and worked in Jerusalem, and the various saints who had been active there as well, had been represented on icons and other works of devotional art, like amulets, *ampullae* etc. The protagonists of Christendom were well-known from all sorts of pictorial arts in the Byzantine Church and the other churches of the

East. Icons representing a specific saint offered examples of a central figure, sometimes surrounded by scenes from his life. Multi-image and multi-scene icons, such as calendar icons, and multi-scene liturgical vestments were well-known in the Byzantine Church and in other Eastern churches, and are attested from the eleventh century onward⁴. From the Crusader States we know the interesting twelfth-century icon, probably painted by a Western artist, which represents two rows of saints. The icon, now in the Monastery of St Catherine's, on Mount Sinai, gives three Greek saints: St James, St Stephen and St Paul, and three Latin saints: St Lawrence, St Martin of Tours and St Leonard. It was obviously an icon commanded by Western patrons attempting a compromise between Eastern and Western ideas⁵.

From Western sources, mainly from *Miracula* of the Virgin, we know that the Latins in Outremer shared, to some extent, the Eastern admiration for some of the miracle-working icons of the Virgin in Outremer. However, it is not known in which way

¹ Koenig 1966-1970, IV, 382, ll. 126-127.

² The LBG, now in progress, may offer more examples of the term; dictionaries of Medieval Latin do not yet cover all the Latin texts of the period.

³ ODB III, 1739; Theophanes, c. 339; Moravcsik 1967, 82-83 (19.1); Niketas Byzantios, *Ekthesis*, c. 720. However, it may be useful to consider Russian *proskynetaria* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which may go back to Byzantine models, Seemann 1976, 38-40, 43, Majeska 1984-1985, 111-120, esp. 120.

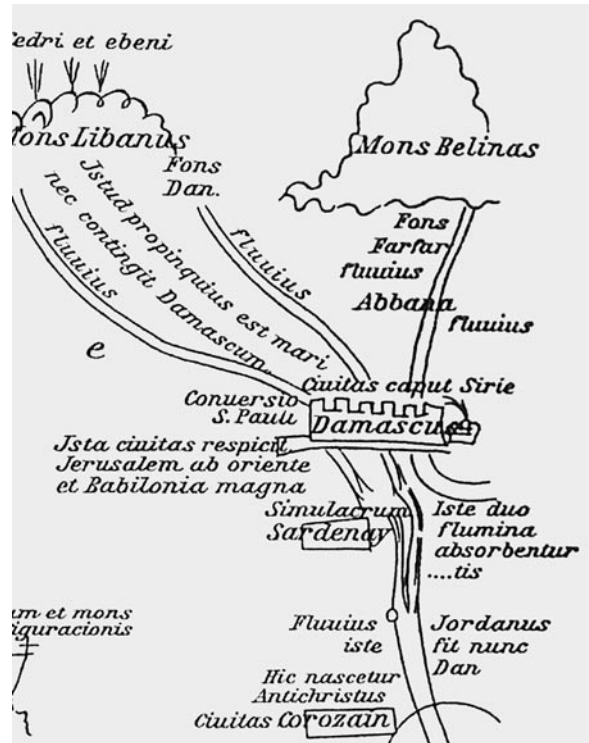
⁴ ODB I, 366-367, s.v. Calendar cycles, which seem to be modelled after mural paintings.

⁵ Weitzmann 1966, 54-6, Pl. 8; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1996, 123, Fig. 9; Catalogue Martigny 2004, no. 6; Catalogue New York 2004, no. 233. The patron of the icon was possibly King Fulk of Jerusalem who came from Anjou where he had sponsored the Church of St Martin of Tours; Bouquet 1840, 732 ('antequam Rex esset Jerusalem, quamdiu comitatum andegavensem tenuit, ecclesiam Sancti Martini turonensis in quantum potuit infestavit').

westerners venerated these icons. Accon, Beirut (Beritus), Diospolis, Gethsemani, Mount Sinai, Saidnaya and other shrines were well-known pilgrimage destinations thanks to these miracle-working icons⁶. Westerners were not totally averse to icons as has often been assumed by Eastern Christians, such as the Byzantine Metropolitan Constantine Stilbes who wrote a treatise against the Latins after the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204⁷.

From an early date multi-scene icons seem to have exerted their influence on Western forms of art. Duecento Italy experienced influence from Byzantine painting. For an example one may refer to a panel painting by Berlinghieri (1228-1274) in the Basilica di S. Croce in Florence, representing St Francis of Assisi: the central portrait of the saint is surrounded by scenes of his life. One should keep in mind that the Franciscan friar had travelled to Egypt in the early thirteenth century, in the company of the Crusaders. Dating from the period of the Latin occupation of Constantinople are traces of a fresco painting of the Life of the saint in the Church of Christ Akataleptos (Kalenderhane). It may have consisted of various scenes of his life, including the feeding of the birds of which small fragments have survived⁸.

Regardless the period in which painters in Jerusalem started to paint multi-scene icons for the pilgrims' market, they certainly needed models and model-books. During the Middle Ages these were available in the East. A single page of a more recent model-book dating to the sixteenth century, now in Yale, has survived. Because of the presence of a number of saints for the month of December it may have been part of a model-book for calendar icons.



Pl. 1. Detail of the thirteenth-century map of the Holy Land, Bodleian Library, Oxford, *Corpus Christi* No 2, fol. 2v (after Röhrich 1895, map VI)

Such model-books offered the examples for multi-scene or multi-image paintings. They may have been used by later painters who concentrated on the so-called *proskynetaria*. It could be interesting to compare the various saints of this model 'page' with representations on later *proskynetaria*. One has also to consider a possible influence of other Western models, such as the iconography of Western saints and illustrated and non-illustrated maps. A late twelfth-century manuscript in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, 76 F 5, fol. 1r, offers a miniature with a number of the holy places and shrines in and around Jerusalem⁹. A thirteenth-century drawing of the Holy Land, Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Corpus Christi*, no. 2, fol. 2v (Pl. 1), which was made around 1235, mentions a number of cities with geographical and other relevant information for pilgrims and non-pilgrims. The only icon mentioned on the map is the icon of Saidnaya, called 'simulacrum Sardenay'. Saidnaya was then still a popular shrine for westerners. The mapmaker, however, is wrong in locating the sanctuary south of Damascus, as it is situated some 20 km north of this city¹⁰.

⁶ For the icons in Outremer see Mussafia 1886, 947, 949, 955, 956, 971, and Mussafia 1888, 7, 16, 19, 75. A survey of the presence of 'icon miracles', their translation and reception in the West, could be of interest.

⁷ Pascalis Romanus, a twelfth-century translator of Greek texts, uses the term 'icona' and 'imago' for icons appearing in dreams, Collin-Roset 1963, 169; Darrouzès 1963, 72.

⁸ E.g. Janin 1969, 506.

⁹ Cahn, Marrow 1978, no. 87, 273s.; cf. Buchthal 1979, 14, and n. 11; Immerzeel 2004, 40, 45, Pl. 10. The miniature in the The Hague manuscript originates from the Abbey of Saint Bertin, Saint Omer (Northern France); Smeyers 1998, 76, and 78 (pl. 31).

¹⁰ For the thirteenth-century map see Röhrich 1895, 177-180, and map VI.

Long before the coming of the Crusaders, pictorial traditions had existed in Jerusalem where the Byzantine Orthodox Patriarchate and the other Eastern Christian communities, the Armenians, the Copts, the Georgians, the Nestorians, the Syrian Orthodox (in Western sources often called Jacobites), and the Melkites (Arabic speaking Byzantine Orthodox) and not to forget the many pilgrims from the various Eastern churches needed icons and paintings for church decoration and the illumination of manuscripts. This production must have taken place in monasteries in and around Jerusalem, and in the ateliers of lay people. Unfortunately not much is known of this artistic production before, during and after the Latin rule in Palestine. Such *religiosa* found their way to religious institutions and to visiting pilgrims, but details of a possible trade are not known. Jerusalem had always been the main pilgrimage aim for Christians. The numerous pilgrims had to be catered for with food and accommodation. *Devotionalia* had to be provided for those who wanted to take home pious souvenirs, to remember their pilgrimage. All sorts of pious souvenirs were produced for this tourist market: *encolpia*, *ampullae* (for holy sand, water, oil), palm branches, relics, reliquaries etc.¹¹. Icons were doubtless available for the tourist trade, although they must have been fairly expensive.

References to the production, buying and selling of icons are few. This goes for Western and Eastern sources. Another problem for the study of icon painting in the Eastern churches, including those in Palestine and Syria, is the anonymity of the artists. Their origins and the workshops where they were active remain equally unknown. Few painters are known by name. It is therefore interesting to find some references to icon painters and the icon trade in Western sources.

Firstly there is the collection of Miracles of the Virgin, *Les Miracles de Notre Dame*, compiled by the Benedictine monk Gautier de Coincy, who lived from ca 1177 until 1236. A number of his miracles were modelled after collections of Miracles of the Virgin composed by Hugh de Farsit and by others, which were written in Latin. Not always are the sources of a specific miracle known. Gautier de Coincy translated these Miracles into French. He spent his life as a monk in the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Médard, near Soissons (Northern France), from 1193 until 1214. Before returning to Saint Médard in 1233 as 'grand prieur' he spent some time in the

priory of Vic-sur-Aisne (some 20 km to the west of Soissons)¹². His activities as translator and versifier of the miracles seem to have taken place mainly in Vic-sur-Aisne. In some of the Miracles he introduced features of Eastern life, such as a Saracen who cherished an image of the Virgin which started producing oil and makes him and his family convert to Christendom. The Miracle of the Saracen is also known in an Arabic and Ethiopic version¹³. In other miracles a prominent role is played by images of the Virgin. The icon of the Virgin in Constantinople which defended the City is part of Gautier's collection. The Miracle of Saidnaya, *De l'ymage Nostre Dame de Sardanei*, is of interest for our subject. In this story, widely known according to Gautier (l. 10, 'En latin est en mout de leuz'), the term 'icon' (in the variants 'ycoyne', 'ycoine' and 'ycoinne'; occasionally the term 'anscoin(n)e' occurs in French texts) is used alternately with the term image ('ymage') to designate the panel painting in the well-known shrine of Our Lady of Saidnaya¹⁴. Here Christian and Muslim pilgrims sought healing for various diseases by venerating the miracle-working icon of Our Lady which exuded beneficial oil. At the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin (15 August) and her Nativity (8 September) large crowds came to Saidnaya. Although not all of the ca. eighty known manuscripts use the term 'icon' for the painting in this sanctuary, it is useful to pay attention to the text, and especially to its context as we shall see below. One of the manuscripts on which the most recent edition of the text is based, the manuscript L (Paris, BN 22928, fourteenth century, where the Miracle

¹¹ Seals and other pilgrim tokens of clay, like amulets, flasks and tablets, had sometimes imprints of the picture of a saint, like St Menas and St Symeon the Stylite. They could be regarded as 'taillies', see e.g. Ousterhout 1990, Ills 8, 14-19 etc.; and Vikan 1982, *passim*. For the Old French 'entaillies' see Grandsaignes d'Hauterive 1947, 221, s.v. *entaillier* ('tailler, ciseler, sculpter, graver', XIe-XVIe s.); a late twelfth-century Latin version speaks of an 'ychoniam sculptam'; Devos 1947, 272.

¹² For a general introduction to the life and works of Gautier de Coincy, Koenig 1966-1970, I, vii-l.

¹³ Villecourt 1924, 27; see also Nasrallah 1988, 244-254.

¹⁴ Koenig 1966-1970, IV, 378-411. It would be interesting to make an inventory of the manuscripts which use the term 'icon', eventually changing into 'statue' as some illustrations show, see also note 16 below. It could well be that manuscripts written in Soissons and in the tradition of Outremer (see below, note 16) would have preserved the term 'icon' where others may have adapted to local use.

occupies fols 255b-260d), seems to originate from Soissons¹⁵. The use of the term 'icon' in this manuscript suggests that the term was taken from an authentic model circulating in the city. Two illuminated manuscripts of the work are related to the illumination school of Saint-Jean d'Acre, of the late thirteenth century and pose their own problems concerning the illustration of the subject discussed here¹⁶.

The Miracle of the Lady of Saidnaya (Sardenay) became popular in the West, thanks to the many manuscripts in which Gautier's vernacular compilation was preserved and a number of other Western versions, in Latin and in French. Here I shall only deal with the text as 'reworked' by Gautier de Coincy and with a similar text written by an anonymous compatriot who, like Gautier de Coincy, came from Northern France.

Soissons was a bishopric in Picardy and an important religious centre. The Abbey of Saint Médard (just outside the walls of the city), with its ancient royal connections, was a favourite

pilgrimage attraction. The bishops and counts of Soissons were active participants in the Crusades. Nivelon of Soissons participated in the Fourth Crusade and had taken his share from the *spolia* of Constantinople which he brought back to Soissons and other places in his diocese. He was eventually nominated archbishop of Thessalonica but never reached his see. He died in Bari, on the way to Thessalonica¹⁷. Contacts with Outremer were not exceptional in the city of Soissons, and it is hardly a surprise to find the well-known story of the Lady of Saidnaya in the compilation made in a priory of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Médard. One of the citizens of Soissons had brought home from his journey to the East a flask with holy oil from the icon of Saidnaya at the time when Gautier de Coincy was actively engaged in his project to translate the Latin Miracles of the Virgin into French. Saidnaya was a shrine where Christians from the various churches in East and West and Muslims from various places, joined in the veneration of the Virgin. The oil which poured from the miraculously incarnated breasts of the Virgin had healing forces and was sold to pilgrims. Even a sultan from Damascus found healing for an eye disease¹⁸.

In some nine hundred verses Gautier tells us the story of the Miracle of Saidnaya, which he calls 'Sardanei' (in Latin, in Old French and other vernaculars of the West various forms of the name can be found). Before discussing details, the story of the Miracle has to be resumed in a few lines. At an unknown date (some Western versions say at the time of the Byzantine and Armenian rule of Palestine) a pious lady from Damascus retired from the world and started to live as a recluse in Saidnaya. She built a small oratory in honour of Our Lady and offered hospitality to passing pilgrims. One day a monk from Constantinople came to her hospice. On his departure she asked him to find her an icon of Our Lady in Jerusalem and bring it to her on his way back home.

For some reason the monk forgot all about the icon and was reminded of his forgetfulness by a celestial voice. He returned to Jerusalem and finally found the street where icons were sold. His search for icons suggests that not every pilgrim knew where to find them. After many vicissitudes he returned to Saidnaya and decided to stay there.

Monasteries, for men and women who lived a separate monastic life, were not exceptional in the Byzantine Church. Jerusalem was apparently a

¹⁵ Koenig 1966-1970, I, xxxv, and IV, 378; for a description of this richly illustrated manuscript see Ducrot-Granderye 1932, 63-66.

¹⁶ Illustrations of the text of Gautier de Coincy sometimes depict a statue where in the text an icon is mentioned, see e.g. Poquet 1857, 543 (an icon in Constantinople). The pictorial tradition may reveal interesting details about the reception of the Miracle of Saidnaya in the West. Sometimes the Virgin is depicted with a crown which is contrary to the Byzantine tradition (e.g. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Y 389 (now 71A24, fol. 2v, 27r); Focillon 1950; Poquet 1890 (inaccessible); for the artistic relation with Saint-Jean d'Acre, see Folda 1976, 196-197, no. 13 (Paris, BN, MS. Fr. 19166), 197, no. 14 (Paris, BN, MS. Fr. 1533), both written in Paris in the early 1280s.

¹⁷ For the *spolia* brought to Soissons by Nivelon and the *anonymus* of Soissons, see Cartellieri/Stechele 1909, 63-64, Riant 1877-1878, I, 3-9, and Andrea 2000, 223-238 (text at 230-238). For the counts of Soissons, Runciman 1971; for the Abbey of Saint Médard, Poquet 1850.

¹⁸ Baraz 1995, 181-191, esp. 189, for a description by the Coptic writer Abu-l Makarim. A survey of the presence of reliquaries containing oil from Saidnaya may lead to more text evidence and pictorial material on the miracle and on the pilgrimage of westerners to this famous shrine. The relic is said to have been in Cluny (Vansleb 1677, 158-159, see also Cerulli 1943, 273, and n. 3), Canterbury (Schefer 1892, 66, who refers to Dart 1726 (?), 47), Altavaux (Haute Vienne), see Devos, 1947, 273s.; see also Rey 1883, 296, who does not give references but mentions the inscription of the flask which said 'de oleo Sanctae Mariae de Sardiney quod fluit de pectore et de mamillis ejusdem ymaginis beatae Mariae Virginis'; Immerzeel 2005.

place to by icons, unless Gautier de Coincy introduces, knowingly or unknowingly, an anachronism into the text, which makes his story no less interesting for our subject. At all times it must have been rather normal to buy icons in Jerusalem. The Western model followed by Gautier must have mentioned the term 'icon' for the painting which the monk had to bring from Jerusalem, otherwise Gautier should have had to introduce a term which was not very familiar to him. Other Western versions say that the icon came from Constantinople or was made in the Greek capital. One can hardly imagine that Gautier was introducing a 'new' element into his text, although the difference between the various Western versions of the Miracle of Saidnaya in this respect asks for an explanation. The way in which the icon has sometimes been described as having been made 'in the Greek way' may have caused a diversion from the original text¹⁹. It is not very likely that later oral sources are responsible for the introduction of the term 'icon'. Gautier de Coincy gives a unique description of what we may call the 'Icon Street of Jerusalem':

*A la cité tantost revient.
Tant va et vient sanz atendue
Des ymages trueve la rue.
Ymages voit sus et jus maintes,
Et d'entaillies et de paintes,
Et ça et la assez coloye;
Ne seit la quele penre doye.
En la fin voit une tavlete
Ou il a painte une ymagete
De Nostre Dame mout tres bele.
N'i a si bonne com est cele
Pour porter loins, ce li est vis.
Sanz lonc marchié, sanz lonc devis
L'a achatee, si s'en torne.
En la cité plus ne sejourne,
Ainz s'en depart isnelepas²⁰.*

From this passage we may draw a few conclusions concerning icons which were for sale in Jerusalem. They were made in various sizes, of various makings, painted and 'entaillies'. The latter term may stand for 'sculptured' images such as relief icons, or icons with a gesso ground or ornaments of gesso²¹. The materials of which the icons were made must also have varied, wood, stone, marble, gypsum, etc. Elsewhere Gautier describes the icon of Saidnaya as being painted on wood (l. 280, 'de fust'). One may

be sure that the iconography of the icons also varied. The shops, probably small shops, were concentrated in a special street, and showed the icons hanging on the walls and standing on the floor, especially if made of marble and stone, and in case they were of considerable size and weight. After some bargaining (l. 136, 'sanz long marchié') and without much further discussion the Greek monk bought a small icon (l. 131, 'tavlete', l. 132, 'une ymagete'). A small icon was easy to carry on the journey back and would probably suit the Lady in Saidnaya who had a small oratory.

Gautier de Coincy never travelled to the East himself. As long as his Latin model for the Miracle of Saidnaya is not known, we do not know to which extent Gautier 'embroidered' upon his text to give it a more colourful setting. This was not unusual for 'translators' and others who reworked their models. The *Chronicle* of Matthew Paris, where we find the same story, gives a sober version of the buying of the icon²². However, it is not very likely that

¹⁹ Gautier de Coincy must have used a manuscript from Saint Médard which may have received a Latin version of the Miracle of Saidnaya from returning Templars. Elsewhere ('Les villes de province byzantines et les échanges culturels. Quelques traducteurs peu connus', Ciggaar 2005), I have suggested that one of the Latin versions was directly translated from a model in the scriptorium of Saidnaya, see e.g. Cerulli 1943, 272 ('Ista translata sunt de armario Sardani veraci stilo scripta'), see also Devos 1947, 249.

²⁰ Koenig 1966-1970, IV, 382-383, ll. 124-139; a Greek version of the Miracle of Saidnaya has not been found so far, although it seems logical that it should have existed, since Saidnaya was an Orthodox (i.e. Melkite) monastery. As for the 'origin' of the icon and its maker, they could possibly be explained by an international 'trade' in icons and by a migration of Greek icon painters. A new edition and translation of an Arabic sermon on the miracle by patriarch/bishop Saint Cyrillus could be of interest, cf. Graf 1944-1953 I, 256-257. For an English translation see Appendix I.

²¹ e.g. Lange 1964, passim; see also note 11 supra; for raised gesso grounds see e.g. Cormack and Mihalarias 1984, 132-141, esp. 132, 138, for the use of gesso in Byzantine icons. In a miracle story about an icon in Constantinople, in a twelfth/thirteenth century manuscript in Ripoll, the icon of the Virgin is described as 'ycona mirabilis ...non ligno, aut lapide, aut auro, aut argento, aut aliquo metallo, set angelicis machinis fit', indicating that icons were not necessarily paintings on wood, Baraut 1956, 149.

²² For Matthew Paris, Luard 1872-1884, II, 485, 'Et veniens ad locum ubi iconiae vendebantur, unam quae sibi placuit comparavit, et secum rediens portavit'; an anonymous Latin version is even more sober, Peeters, 1906, 149, 'Qui statim ad civitatem regrediens pulcherrimam sibi beate

Gautier's description of the 'Icon Street' is pure fantasy. He may have repeated, although in a reworked form, the information given by his model. Stories which he heard from returning countrymen may have confirmed and corroborated the information given by his model. The author seems to give the answer himself when he anticipates the credulity of people who would not believe the veracity of the wonderful miracle in Syria. As a possible witness he brings forward a citizen of Soissons who is still alive and who, three years before, had given some of the Holy Oil from the icon to the Abbey of Saint Médard (ll. 604-617). And if this were not enough he refers to even more reliable witnesses, the many Templars who returned to France where they visited Soissons. They had told him about the miracle and the miraculous oil produced by the icon which they distributed among their own sanctuaries (ll. 618-624). It is not to be excluded that the Templars played a certain role in Saidnaya, possibly a role of intermediary between the various nations who visited the place which was an interconfessional pilgrim's destination. The fact that almost every Western version of the Miracle of Saidnaya mentions the Templars, suggests that they seem to have played a role in the transmission of the tale to the

West. The Templars may also have been familiar with the production of icons in Jerusalem²³.

In 1129 Laon had become the first settlement of the Templars in Picardy. A century later, around 1220, they settled in Maupas, just outside the walls of Soissons. A few years later the Templars came to live on the Mont-de-Soissons, some 20 km south-east of Soissons²⁴. Regular contacts with Templars and other people returning from the East and visiting Soissons and the Abbey of Saint Médard were thus possible. These contacts stand almost guarantee for the veracity of Gautier's description of the 'Icon Street' in Jerusalem. Readers, listeners, and copyists of the numerous manuscripts of the Miracle which mentions such a highly venerated icon could not deceive the many westerners who were familiar with the situation in Jerusalem, by hear-say or by having made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem themselves. *Mutatis mutandis* this also goes for the use of the term 'icon' (ll. 122, 301, 403, 425), although Gautier alternately uses the word 'image', but he may have done so for stylistic reasons. This may even go for the illustration of the Miracle of Saidnaya (see also below)²⁵. Gautier may have correctly followed his model, and was possibly confirmed of the veracity of his 'translation' by informants who returned from the East.

From icons one has to go to the ateliers where they were made and to the painters themselves. Our second source is another translator of the Miracle of Saidnaya into French, an *anonymus*, who also came from Northern France. When he describes the search for icons in Jerusalem by the Greek monk, he too may 'embroider' upon his subject, if compared with other vernacular versions of the Miracle, by letting the monk visit the atelier of a master painter who specialised in icons for churches. Like Gautier de Coincy this anonymous French author must have realised that among his audience were people who were familiar with the situation in Jerusalem:

[...a lacune in the text]
Qu'a un des plus maistres peintors. / fo. 219
Qui li monstrast de ses labors.
Sil li mostra a es iglises
Images de diverces gises.
En trestotes une en i ot
Qui plus que les autres li plot:
Si se haste de l'esliser;
*Après se mist el repaïrer*²⁶.

Marie comparavit ymaginem'. Interestingly Philippe Mousket, writing after 1251, corroborates that the image was painted on wood and was therefore an icon (in the traditional way), Michelant/Raynaud 1882, 120, ll. 10986-10987, 'Por çou qu'ele est en bosc formée, /S'est l'ymage Ycoïne apielée'; one of the continuations of William of Tyre, the so-called *Continuation de Rothelin* (said to have originated in Soissons, cf. Morgan 1982, 251), RHC Occ. II, 513, says, under the year 1229, 'En cele table si estoit pointee l'imaige Nostre Dame Sainte Marie, et estoit entaillée suer le fust'.

²³ Koenig 1966-1970, IV, 401, ll. 610-624.

²⁴ For Templars in Soissons and the Soissonnais, Melleville 1865, 366.

²⁵ The Miracle of Saidnaya is the only miracle in which Gautier uses the term 'icon', see Collet 2000, lxiii. In other miracles of icons he uses sometimes the term 'tavlete', for instance for the icon in a private house in Constantinople, Koenig 1966-1970, II, 101, l. 17.

²⁶ Raynaud, 1882, 532, ll. 73-80, and 537, glossary s.v. *es*, for line 75. Another French version gives a variant for the passage, Robert Grosseteste 1852, 117, ll. 107-110, 'A un des mestre peintours/Kil li monstrast de ses labors./E cil li mostra a ses yglises/Ymages de diverses gwise', suggesting that the artist took his client to the churches where his work was to be seen. This is not logical, since one may assume that the monk had to choose a painting from the stock in the atelier. For an English translation see Appendix II.

Here the monk could make a choice in the workshop of one of the master painters in Jerusalem, who was certainly not the only icon painter in town. Here the atelier was apparently the place where the painter sold his works. It is possible that painters and sellers of icons lived in the same quarter. The shops mentioned by Gautier may have sold other *religiosa* as well. Where and how the icon production of monks in monasteries was sold, in commission or directly from the monastery, remains a mystery. The use of the term 'master painter' seems a Western element, but may have been borrowed from a Byzantine context²⁷.

For both Western sources one may suggest that they rendered the reality of their day. They may have found the information in their models, information which was corroborated by returning pilgrims and other travellers. Realistic descriptions of life in Eastern cities in French medieval literature were not exceptional. The *Journey of Charlemagne to Jerusalem and Constantinople*, written around 1150, describes in a rather realistic way one of the market places in Jerusalem²⁸. Travellers to the East could see for themselves the veneration of icons by Eastern Christians and by some of the Latin residents. For various reasons the latter sometimes possessed icons, like the Latin patriarch in Antioch who had given precious *liturgica*, including a silver icon ('iconia una argentea') into the custody of the Hospitallers, who returned them in 1209²⁹.

Residents and travellers could see how professional life was organised in the East. Professions were concentrated in certain areas and certain streets, as they still are sometimes. The Byzantine *Book of the Prefect* (also called the *Book of the Eparch*) describes the professional activities of the guilds in Constantinople. The book stands probably model for other, former Byzantine, cities like Jerusalem, Antioch etc.³⁰. Painters and icon shops are not mentioned in the tenth-century *Book of the Prefect*, a compilation now attributed to the Emperor Leo the Wise. Painters, more precisely lay painters, apparently did not form a guild. More than once they exercised their profession in an ambulant way when decorating churches and other buildings. In earlier times icon painting may have been concentrated in monasteries, which did not necessitate the formation of a guild, let alone the profane character of membership of a guild and the obligation to follow its rules. Icon shops or streets where painters were active are not mentioned in the

Estat de la Cité, a description of Jerusalem in Crusader times. The situation in this city may have been similar³¹. In the Miracle of Saidnaya we read that the monk forgot about his promise, which suggests that such shops and ateliers were in an area which pilgrims did not visit during a short visit to Jerusalem. Such shops may have been hidden in small streets, off the main roads, in the neighbourhood of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

In the context of the present 'search' for icons and painting activities in Jerusalem it may be interesting to draw attention to another French collection of Marian miracles, dating to the late twelfth century, of which two miracles have been fragmentarily preserved in the Municipal Library of Orleans. In one of these miracles we are told where painting materials can be bought in Jerusalem. The story speaks about a monastery in Jerusalem dedicated to the Virgin Mary, which suffers from a famine. In a description of the neighbourhood we read that the Syrians are said to sell 'en la rue voltice' (i.e. the Covered Street, probably the 'rue des Herbes') all sorts of spices and pigments: 'U Suriān vendent ... /azzor grezzeis et orpiment, /vert, vermeillon, ...'. The anonymous compiler of what may be considered to be the oldest collection of Marian miracles in the vernacular is thought to have lived for some time in Jerusalem, before the conquest by Saladin. Unfortunately it is not clear who are meant by the 'Suriāns', the Syrians. They may have been Melkites or Orthodox Syrians. This interesting information on the trade of pigments, including the precious lapis lazuli ('azzor grezzeis', i.e. Greek azur) confirms painting activities in Jerusalem³².

²⁷ For Maistor (μαῖστορ), see ODB, II, 1269 (reference to Oikonomides 1979, 111s., inaccessible).

²⁸ Richard 1965, 552-555.

²⁹ Delaville le Roulx 1894-1904, II, 112, no. 1336 (in October 1209, Pierre de Loces, Latin patriarch of Antioch, recovers the treasury of the Cathedral which may have contained objects belonging to the former Greek patriarchs. Koder 1991, for the Book of the Eparch.

³¹ *L'Estat de la Cité*, Michelant/Raynaud 1882, 26, where mention is made of the 'Rue dou Patriarche' and the 'Canges des Suriens', apparently in the quarter where the Eastern Christians resided. This seems to corroborate the absence of workshops for icon making in the *Book of the Eparch*.

³² Meyer 1895, 34-36, 42, 48-49; Koder 1991, 119-120, mentions the trade of spices and pigments in Constantinople. The direct access to precious pigments by Western patrons and their envoys has to be taken into account when studying monuments in the West where such materials were used.



Pl. 2. Miniature: Icon shop in Jerusalem; *Cantigas of Alfonso the Wise of Castile*, late thirteenth century; *Bibliotheca de San Lorenzo el real de El Escorial, Madrid, T.I.j* (after Lovillo 1949, Pl. 12)

It is clear that the study of the iconography of the Miracle of Saidnaya is a *desideratum*. The work of Gautier de Coincy could be a good starting point. Recently David Jacoby drew attention to what is, in his words, the 'earliest known depiction of a shop selling icons'. He refers to a miniature in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* written by Alfonso X the Wise of

Castile (1221-1284). *Cantiga* 9, which gives a Spanish version of the Miracle of Saidnaya, is illustrated in six different scenes, one of which represents the monk who buys an icon in a shop where three more icons are for sale (Pl. 2). The shop is situated under two gothic arches, against a background of crenellated walls. The different sets of walls may represent the walls of a closed quarter, the city walls and possibly the walls of an enclosed building. Against the wall of the shop, under one of the arches, hangs an icon with Virgin and Child. Two other icons, a Crucifixion and another Mother with Child, stand on a counter. The shopkeeper hands an icon of the Virgin with Child, slightly smaller than the other ones, to the monk who remains on horse back, apparently in a hurry to do his shopping. A small boy points to another icon. The miniature is part of the beautifully illustrated manuscript Escorial T.I.j, Madrid, which was produced shortly after 1265, during the lifetime of Alfonso X. For more than one reason it may be interesting to study the miniatures of the manuscripts containing the Miracle collection of Gautier de Coincy and compare them with the richly illustrated manuscript in Madrid, and with the text of the miracles as they occur in the *Cantigas*. Not only may the study of the illumination of the Miracle of Saidnaya reveal interesting features about the trade in Jerusalem, it may also help to understand the relations between the *Cantigas* and other versions in the vernacular, such as the Marian Miracles in Ripoll. Some of the *Cantigas* seem to derive from the same source used by Gautier de Coincy, or even go back to the latter's collection which became so popular. The discrepancy between the scene depicting the icon shop in Jerusalem in the Spanish manuscript and the 'sober' description of the purchase of the icon by the monk in the *Cantiga* (not entirely identical with the version of Gautier de Coincy) may go back to the illustration programme of Gautier de Coincy's *Miracles de Nostre Dame* which may have been well known thanks to the numerous manuscripts of this work³³.

Greek sources written during the Crusader period do not give much information on icon painting in Jerusalem. Annemarie Weyl Carr has drawn attention to the artistic activities in the Byzantine provinces during the Comnenian period and beyond. Especially in Cyprus one finds wall paintings of this period. The Comnenian Renaissance reached Syria and Palestine, where artistic activities are known to have taken place³⁴. A good example is

The presence of precious painting material may have reached the West via other channels than has been assumed so far. For the Covered Street, Richard 1965, 553.

³³ Jacoby 2004, 101, 104 (refers to B.Z. Kedar, 'Convergences of Oriental, Christian, Muslim and Frankish Worshippers: The case of Saydnaya', in *De Sion exhibit lex et verbum domini de Hierusalem: Essays on medieval law, liturgy and literature in honour of Amnon Lindner*, Yitzhak Hen (ed.), *Cultural encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, 1, 2001, 59-69, inaccessible; Guerrero Lovillo 1949, Pl. 12 (left, middle, 'Como o monge comprou a omagen de Santa Maria que lle rogou a bona dona' (How the monk buys an icon of Saint Mary which the good lady had asked him); the facsimile edition (*Alfonso X el Sabio, Cantigas de Santa Maria: Edición facsimil del Códice T.I.j. de la Biblioteca de San Lorenzo el Real de El Escorial, Siglo XIII*, Madrid, Editorial Internacional de Libros Antiguos [n.d.], is inaccessible. Mettmann 1986, 79-84, 326-328. In the *Cantiga* the lady in Saidnaya asks her visitor if he is returning to France (Cerulli 1943, 280-282, gives a version of the Miracle in which a French merchant visits Saidnaya). For other Marian collections in Spain see Baraut 1956.

³⁴ Weyl Carr 1982, esp. 59-61; eadem, 1987, esp. 158; Cruikshank Dodd 2001; eadem, 2004; Immerzeel 2004; for Antioch see now Saminsky 2005.

the redecoration of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in the 1160s. The project was sponsored by the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comnenus and Amalric, the Latin king of Jerusalem. Various expert craftsmen were involved in the work, among whom a Syrian mosaicist, called Basil, who left his name in one of the mosaics. Abu Gosh is another church where various craftsmen, among whom painters, were actively engaged³⁵. A number of these artists may have come to Syria and Palestine from Constantinople where, after the death of Manuel Comnenus in 1180, political instability became the rule. They may have taken with them part of their artistic production and sold it in their new home lands. The situation in Constantinople deteriorated even more after the Latin conquest of the Greek capital in 1204. Cyprus, Antioch and Jerusalem were attractive places for refugee artists who wanted to find an Orthodox clientele³⁶.

From Greek sources of this period only two painters are known by name, Petros and Stephanos, two Byzantine icon painters. Both left their names on icons which are now in the collection of the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai. Petros is of special interest for the history of icon painting in Jerusalem. In the early thirteenth century he spent some time in Jerusalem where he stood in contact with Euthymios II, Greek patriarch of Jerusalem. It is possible that eventually he retired to Mount Sinai³⁷. His presence in Jerusalem and the sponsoring of icons by Crusader patrons are proof of the production of icons in Jerusalem in the period when the text of the Miracle of Saidnaya was brought to the West in Latin and possibly also in the vernaculars. More than once was the text translated into French, by Gautier de Coincy and his anonymous compatriot, and possibly by others as well. They let us have a look into a shop where icons were sold and in the atelier of one of the master painters who was actively working for ecclesiastical patrons. Painting material was easily available. Some Western pilgrims have taken home icons and possibly other paintings as well, but so far references are scarce³⁸. Western residents may have bought icons for private devotion or as patrons of Western churches, and even for Eastern churches when mixed marriages or diplomatic contacts played a role.

Icon painting in Jerusalem during the Middle Ages is attested in Byzantine and Western sources. In spite of the loss of Jerusalem to the Saracens,

pilgrims and other believers continued to flock to the Eternal City where the Byzantine Orthodox patriarchate and other Eastern Christian communities had survived the vicissitudes of history. The production of icons must have continued in later times. For practical reasons painting activities had to continue. Renovation, redecoration and restoration of buildings and artefacts, and the making and repairing of *devotionalia* necessitated such activities. Small as they were icons were *proskynetaria* avant la lettre. Painting activities may eventually have concentrated on a more tourist orientated market by a free exploitation of calendar icons, and by using old models for a new genre, the *proskynetaria*, as we know them today. The workshops which produced icons may have included *proskynetaria* in their production line. A survey of the term 'icona' and its vernacular variants in Western literary and religious sources and a study of the way the term has been used in the various vernaculars, including the study of medieval maps, may reveal more information on the tradition of icon painting in Outremer in general and the trade of icons. At the same time it may indicate the beginning and gradual development of a new genre of painting in the Holy Land, the *proskynetaria*. Only then is it possible to find an answer to the question where the roots of the new genre lie, and where a possible symbiosis did develop: *traditio greca* or *inventio latina*? For the time being the Miracle of Saidnaya allows us to

³⁵ For artistic activities in the Latin States see e.g. Kühnel 1994, *passim*, for Bethlehem at 54-59. For the mosaics in Bethlehem see Hunt 2000, 231-240; for icon painting in the context of Crusader rule, see e.g. Weitzmann 1966; see also Folda 1995.

³⁶ Brand 1968, gives a good description of the political situation after 1180.

³⁷ ODB I, 200-201, s.v. Artists (for the painters Petros and Stephanos); ODB II, 980, s.v. Icons, for icon painting in general. For more information on the painter Petros, see Mouriki 1988, 329-347, and Lafontaine-Dosogne 1996, 120.

³⁸ For icons brought to the West by pilgrims, Ringbom 1965, 14, who refers to two texts in Mussafia 1888, 73, 89, of which the latter refers to a miracle in a twelfth-century manuscript in the Arsenal Library, Paris, no. 903, where a non-Christian lady asks her brother to bring her an image of Our Lady from the Holy Land (the former reference is not clear). The miracle resembles the Miracle of Saidnaya, because she wants an image which exudes oil. The West had not always been unfamiliar with icons, e.g. Markus 1978, 151-157.

take a view of the 'Icon Street' of Jerusalem, possibly the street where in later times *proskynetaria* were being sold to pilgrims.

APPENDIX I, Koenig, 1966-1970, IV, 382-383, ll. 124-139

And immediately he returns to the city.
 And incessantly wanders around /125
 Until he finds the street of the icons.
 He sees many icons hanging high and low, everywhere
 Sculptured/engraved icons and painted icons,
 And he walks around;
 And does not know which one he should take. /130
 Eventually he finds a small panel painting
 Representing a portrait of
 Our Lady which is most beautiful.
 There is none so suitable as this one
 To take on a long journey, he thinks. /135
 Without much bargaining, without further discussion
 He has bought it and leaves.
 He no longer stays in the city
 But departs in great haste.

APPENDIX II, *Anonymus*, Raynaud 1882, 532, ll. 73-80

[so that he went] to one of the master painters
 Who showed him what he had made/laboured
 And he showed him, intended for churches,/75
 Paintings of different kinds.
 Among all these there was one
 Which pleased him more than the others
 And he hastens to buy it
 Thereupon he left to return to his country./80

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Representations of Jerusalem on Medieval Maps and Miniatures

Martine MEUWESE

Although Jerusalem was considered to be the centre of the world, it was so remote for most Christians in medieval Europe that the city was unimaginable except in terms of their own familiar realities. For spiritual reasons, too, representations of the city of Jerusalem in medieval Western manuscripts were more symbolic than realistic, as I hope to demonstrate in this article with some representative examples, ‘zooming in’ from the representation of Jerusalem on world maps, to regional maps of the Holy Land, city maps of Jerusalem, and representations of the city itself¹.

MAPPÆ MUNDI: MAPS OF THE WORLD

It is unlikely that anybody looking at a ‘world map’ in the Middle Ages would have thought that it portrayed a geographical representation of the earth². A medieval map of the world had an entirely different purpose from that of an atlas. Such maps were first of all intended to be a framework for knowledge and depict the world as a place of human history. Hence they were more like a theological encyclopaedia and never intended to be a chart for travellers.

One example is a map of the world drawn on the first page of a psalter produced in London in the 1260s (London, BL, Add. 28681, fol. 9r; Pl. 1). Only measuring some nine centimetres across, it can be considered a tiny world map. Above, between two angels swinging censers, God is represented in the traditional ‘Majestas Domini’ position: he raises his right hand in blessing and in the left hand he holds an orb that itself symbolises the world. Twelve winds are shown as faces blowing out air around the edge of the world. The east is positioned at the top: Paradise is represented by the faces of Adam and Eve in a circle, with the legendary trees of the sun and the moon also depicted there, and the four rivers of Paradise radiating outward from the enclosure. The custom of orienting

maps by placing the east at the top instead of the north, derived from the fact that Christ, like the sun, was expected to rise in the east at the Last Judgment. Europe appears in the lower part on the left of the circle with cities such as Rome and Paris, while Asia is to the right; there the monstrous races, which were thought to exist at the edges of the earth, are stacked³. Africa takes up the whole upper portion.

The circular city of Jerusalem, the centre of Christianity, is set as the ‘middle’ of the world. This central position is based on Ezekiel 5:5, where God promises that he will establish Jerusalem in the midst of nations and the countries that are round about her. In the later Middle Ages this was interpreted literally as the centre of the earth, which caused a reorganisation of maps. Placing Jerusalem in the middle became a cartographic convention, but it does not mean that medieval geographers saw Jerusalem as the actual centre of the world.

Jerusalem was also the focus of the Crusades. It was the spiritual goal that pilgrims most longed to reach because it marked the most important Christian site in the world: that of Christ’s Crucifixion. The famous Hereford Mappa Mundi was painted on a single skin and occupies some one and a half square metres (Pl. 2). It was made in 1290 by Richard of Haldingham, a canon at Hereford Cathedral in the period 1305-1313. England and Hereford itself, where the map was made, are on the periphery to the bottom left. The circular city of Jerusalem is the exact centre of this map, and the compass point in the middle may have been used to draw its circular outer frame, as well as the circle of the city walls. The Crucifixion is depicted

¹ I am grateful to Sophie Oosterwijk, Mat Immerzeel and Tasha Vorderstrasse for helpful comments and suggestions.

² For a survey of medieval maps, see Edson 1997.

³ For a study of the monstrous races and their occurrence on world maps, see Friedman 1981.

above the city, surrounded by Mount Ephraim, the Mount of Olives, and the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Pl. 2). The Crucifixion is the only event from the gospels shown on this map.

The Ebstorf map was made in 1239 in lower Saxony near Lüneburg; it owes its name to its discovery in a closet in the former Benedictine nunnery at Ebstorf. The Ebstorf Convent is depicted as a small edifice between the towns of Lüneburg and Brunswick, and it has been suggested that the nuns of Ebstorf created the map themselves⁴. The map itself was destroyed in the 1943 bombing of Hanover, but four replicas have since been made based on all the available evidence. The Ebstorf map is known to have been much larger than the Hereford map, some three square meters, and drawn on thirty pieces of parchment. Jerusalem is here depicted in gold and is shown as a walled square, with a picture of the Resurrection instead of the Crucifixion. Oddly enough, this Resurrection scene is shown sideways in relation to the map as a whole; Christ is thus made to face the North⁵. A large number of contemporary place names, including monasteries and pilgrimage shrines, are also indicated, and a camel on the left refers to the oriental setting.

MATTHEW PARIS: MAPS OF THE HOLY LAND

Jerusalem was so central to Christian history and theology that the desire to visit its holy sites, especially those of Christ's death and Resurrection contained in the Holy Sepulchre complex, dominated medieval culture⁶. Yet relatively few people in the Middle Ages could make a physical pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Expenses, hardship, tenure to the land, and monastic vows meant that most people had to

look to alternative ways of making such a spiritually significant journey.

Matthew Paris (ca 1200-1259) was a monk at the Benedictine abbey of St Albans in England, which he entered in 1217. He is a remarkable figure for many reasons, not at least since he was evidently a scribe, an artist and an author. The first seven pages of Matthew Paris's famous *Chronica Majora*, written and illuminated about 1250, make up a kind of medieval road map, linking London through the major cities and towns of Europe with the great centres of pilgrimage for Europeans: Rome and Jerusalem. The map's position at the start of this chronicle, accompanied by genealogies, Easter Tables and a calendar specific to the abbey, indicates that Matthew made these maps for the monastic community of St Albans. These pages served the Benedictine brothers perusing them as a spiritual aid in allowing them to make an imaginary pilgrimage that led through Europe to the Crusader city of Acre and eventually to Jerusalem⁷.

The large walled enclosure on the oriented map of the Holy Land is Acre, the last town to remain in the Crusaders' hands. Jerusalem is at the top right, a much smaller walled square space, and above it are the Dead Sea and the river Jordan⁸. Cities are shown by conventional signs, which may perhaps suggest their relative size or importance, but gives no idea of their geographical features or of their actual appearance. The representation of a camel on the map of the Holy Land again emphasizes that this is alien territory.

Matthew's maps exist in multiple versions that are very similar. They all show ships arriving at the port of Jaffa and the square walled city of Jerusalem (e.g. London, BL, Royal 14 C VII, fol. 5r; Pl. 3)⁹. Matthew's radical shift to the more profound Latin language for the inscriptions of Jerusalem – the only Latin of the map as the other inscriptions are in Anglo-Norman – puts the city of Jerusalem at a remove from the rest of the map. The accompanying Anglo-Norman text describes Jerusalem as the most dignified of all cities, situated in the centre of the world, where Christ died to save us all.

The geometric depiction of Jerusalem can be considered as a combination of both the historic earthly Jerusalem and the future heavenly city on earth. Its own confines house the three sites of greatest interest to earthly pilgrims: the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of Solomon, and the Holy Sepulchre. At the same time, the fact that Jerusalem

⁴ Hoogvliet 1996.

⁵ Edson 1997, 138.

⁶ Smith 1991.

⁷ For Matthew Paris and the Maps of the Holy Land, see Connolly 1991; Gaudio 2000; Lewis 1987.

⁸ Lewis 1987, 348, remarks that the striking differences in size between Acre and Jerusalem on the Matthew Paris maps accurately reflect their approximate populations of 30,000 versus 5,000 by the third and fourth decades of the thirteenth century.

⁹ Other Matthew Paris maps of the Holy Land which were bound with the various editions of the *Chronica Majora* are Cambridge, Corpus Christi 16, fol. 56r. and Corpus Christi 26, fol. 4r.



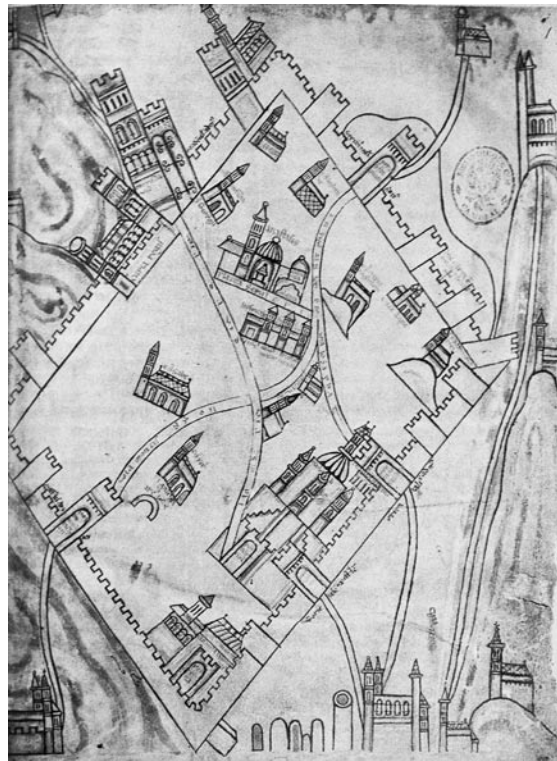
Pl. 1. World map; London, BL, Add. 28681, fol. 9r



Pl. 3. Jerusalem; London, BL, Royal 14 C VII, fol. 5r



Pl. 2. Jerusalem on the Hereford Map



Pl. 4. Jerusalem; Cambrai, BM, 437

is represented with square walls specifically invokes John's apocalyptic vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and so participates in the traditional iconography of this eternal city. Cloistered monks, though discouraged from going on pilgrimage to the earthly city, could thus nonetheless use Matthew's maps for an imaginary journey to the Heavenly Jerusalem¹⁰.

MAPS OF JERUSALEM: THE ROLE OF THE CRUSADES

After the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099, the city became a popular pilgrimage destination for Christians in the West. Alongside numerous verbal descriptions, maps of the city also began to appear in the West in the twelfth century. These Jerusalem maps were invariably accompanied by inscriptions that identify the buildings. Milka Levy-Rubin discussed fourteen maps depicting the Holy City under Frankish rule during the twelfth century. Eleven of those are 'round maps', but there are a

few exceptions, such as the renowned trapezoid Cambrai map, which shows a unique and comparatively accurate rendering of Jerusalem in the Crusader era (Cambrai, BM, 437; Pl. 4)¹¹. This unique pen-drawn map, facing north, opens a miscellany containing among others a text on Jerusalem, produced at Cambrai around 1150.

The outline of the city is a walled square, surrounded on three sides by mountains. In the southeast corner of the city, the domicile of the Order of the Knights Templar is indicated as 'Stabulae Salomonis', a building which usually is not represented on maps. The rendering of profane buildings such as the 'Curia regis' (Royal Court) and 'Turre Tancredi' (Tancred's Tower) are also remarkable. For the sake of visual clarity the artist has depicted the churches in Jerusalem with bell towers, whereas the 'Templum Domini' (Temple Church) further specifies the 'Porta speciosa' (Beautiful Gate) and 'Porta aurea' (Golden Gate), referring to the kiss of Joachim and Anna, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem and the procession on Palm Sunday. The 'Anastasis' building on the 'Platea sepulcri' represents Christ's tomb below the dome of the Holy Sepulchre Church with two chapels called 'Golgotha' and 'Calvaria', the former being the name for the site of the Crucifixion and the latter referring to the Chapel of Adam underneath the site of the Crucifixion. The bell tower and the courtyard indicated on this map were built by the Crusaders¹². The cross on the northeast wall refers to the stone cross erected there by the Crusaders after the capture of Jerusalem in 1099 to mark the spot where the Franks invaded the city. This cross was demolished when Saladin recaptured Jerusalem in 1187 on the very same spot. A striking feature unique to this Cambrai map is its familiarity with the eastern churches in Jerusalem¹³. The fact that the map uses the Greek name 'Anastasis' for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre might be another indication that the creator of the map obtained his information from local Eastern Christians¹⁴. Furthermore, it may be no coincidence that this map was manufactured in the early crusade period in a Benedictine abbey near Cambrai, where a church was devoted to the Holy Sepulchre¹⁵.

Whereas this early Cambrai map is exceptional in attempting to present a more or less topographic rendering of the city, most Crusader maps just show a schematic image of Jerusalem, represented as a circle divided into four parts¹⁶. These round

¹⁰ An English fifteenth-century map of the Holy Land is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 389. This map shows a prospect of the fortified city of Jerusalem.

¹¹ The maps in Cambrai, Montpellier, and Cod. Harleian are exceptional; all other maps are of the circular variety. See Levy-Rubin 1999, 231, 233 (reproduction of Montpellier, BU, sect. méd. H 142, fol. 67v). I am grateful to Tasha Vorderstrasse for drawing my attention to this publication. In Katalog Köln 1985, 73 the Cambrai map is even compared to the Madaba mosaic.

¹² Levy-Rubin 1999, 231.

¹³ Levy-Rubin 1999, 231: 'At least six Eastern churches appear on the map: the church of St Sabas, probably part of the Metochion of the Monastery of Mar Sabas in Jerusalem; the Church of Chariton, where the Syrians displayed the relics of the saint in a wooden chest; the Jacobite Church of St Mary Magdalene; the Church of St George, located in the market; the Church of St Abraham; and the Church of St Bartholomew.'

¹⁴ Levy-Rubin 1999, 231.

¹⁵ Katalog Köln 1985, 74: 'E.L. Heydenreich vermutete zu Recht die in einem zugehefteten Brief dieses Collectars genannten Grafen d'Alsace als Auftraggeber, zudem legt eine Entstehung in der Hauptrekrutierungsregion des 1. Kreuzzuges (Niederlothringen) wie die Cambraier Hl-Grab-Kirche enge Verbindungen nach Jerusalem im gesamten 12. Jahrhundert nahe.' Unfortunately, I could not get hold of Heydenreich's publication. The Katalog Köln 1985 attributes the Cambrai manuscript to the Benedictine abbey Saint-André-du-Cateau, some 22 km east of Cambrai.

¹⁶ Levy-Rubin 1999, 232: 'The two main arteries inside the city intersect in the middle of the circle at the marketplace (Forum rerum venalium), creating four quarters of equal size. Apart from these two crossroads, an additional street, leading to Jehosaphat's gate, is indicated; and in most of

maps face eastwards, just as the world maps do. Two roads diverge symmetrically from David's Gate in the west: one leads south to Bethlehem, the other north to 'Mons Gaudii' (Mountain of Joy), named after the spot from which the Crusaders first perceived Jerusalem in 1099. Unlike the Cambrai map, these round maps not only name the sites, but often also present biblical or apocryphal traditions attached to certain sites.

A miscellany dating from the second half of the twelfth century contains the *Historia Hierosolymitana* by Robert of Reims and by Fulcher of Chartres, a description of the holy sites, and an oriented map of the city, which is again surrounded on three sides by mountains (Brussels, KB, 9823-4; Pl. 5)¹⁷. The main focus is on the sites that are related to the life and Passion of Christ, since these places were of particular importance to pilgrims. In the east are indicated, among other locations, the mountain where Christ was tempted by the devil, the Church of the Ascension ('Ascensio Domini'), the burial place of Mary, the place where Moses struck water from the rock, and the river Jordan flowing from the Dead Sea to the mountains of Lebanon. Inside the city of Jerusalem, Solomon's Temple is indicated by means of fanciful architecture, and the Holy Sepulchre is conventionally represented inside a circle in the lower half of the city. Groups of pilgrims are shown travelling to holy places such as Bethlehem, Bethany, Jericho, Gethsemane, and to Mary's grave. In the northwest a group of pilgrims can be seen walking on the 'Mountain of Joy'.

The famous The Hague map, labelled 'locus quadragesime' (Topography of the Passion), was made around 1200 and heads a psalter that was made for the Abbey of Saint Bertin (The Hague, KB, 76 F 5, fol. 1r; Pl. 6)¹⁸. It shows the same configuration of a round walled city, subdivided by a cross. Once again a circle represents the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the city is surrounded by important sites in the vicinity. On the left the stoning of St Stephen is shown. The church dedicated to St Stephen has been shifted to the bottom of the map in order to present this scene, thus demonstrating that geographic precision was not the main object of these maps. Below, St Demetrius and St George on horseback pursue a group of fleeing mounted Saracens. The saints are not represented with a halo, but their identification is secure because of their names in the inscriptions, and because of

the traditional arms of a red cross on a white shield for St George. The presence of both saints chasing Saracens on the battlefield unmistakably refers to the battle of Antioch during the First Crusade in 1098¹⁹. Written underneath this image is a short lament on Jerusalem. The inscription 'Processio Sepulcri Sancti' close to the Tower of David refers to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, who went in procession around the city walls before conquering Jerusalem about a week later.

This conventional way of depicting Jerusalem lasted up to the mid fifteenth century, even though Jerusalem was no longer a Christian city from 1244 onwards²⁰. Although the fifteenth-century map of the Holy City incorporated in the Codex Aldenburgensis, a chronicle from St Peter's Abbey in Oudenburg (Flanders), is some 250 years younger than the Saint-Bertin map, the lay-out is still very much the same as in the twelfth century (Bruges, Groot Seminarie, 127/5, fol. 18r; Pl. 7)²¹.

JERUSALEM AS CITY

Jerusalem was often a place of conflict. The theme of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem as divine vengeance for the Crucifixion of Christ occurs in Flavius Josephus' *De Bello Judaico* (The Jewish War). This text on the Roman siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple was written in ca A.D. 70, only a few years after the author witnessed these dramatic events. Illustrations of the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans under Emperor Titus

the maps another street begins at St Stephen's Gate and runs below the Temple Mount along the Tyropeon Valley. Although very schematic, this plan does indeed represent the basic street plan of Jerusalem.'

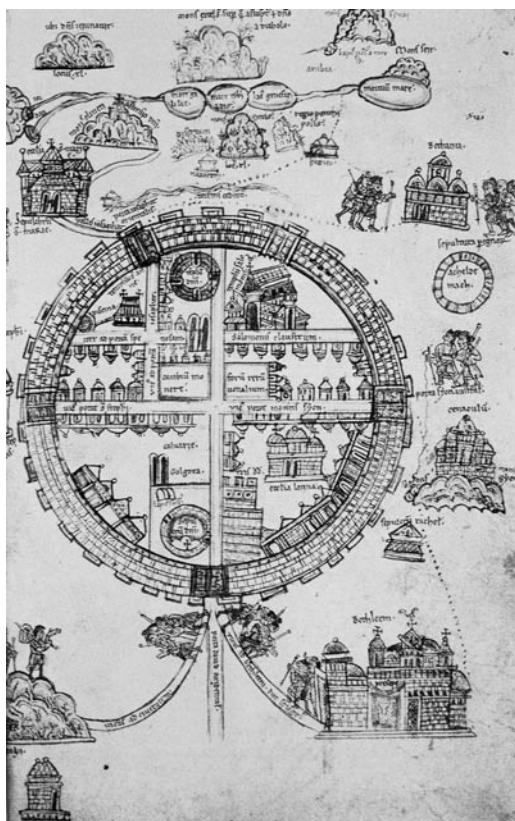
¹⁷ Katalog Köln 1985, 74-75.

¹⁸ See, for example, Katalog Köln 1985, 76-77.

¹⁹ For the battle of Antioch see Meuwese 2005.

²⁰ For more examples of this type of map see Levy-Rubin 1999, who also reproduces the twelfth-century Uppsala map (Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, C.691, fol. 39r), and a map from ca 1260 (Paris, BNF, lat. 8865, fol. 133r).

²¹ For the Codex Aldenburgensis, see Busine/Vandamme 2002, 76, 165. An even more global fifteenth-century English pen-drawn map of the holy sites in and around Jerusalem follows the same basic pattern (Cambridge, Corpus Christi 426, fol. 72r.; see De Hamel 2000, 84-85). This English manuscript, dating from the first half of the fifteenth century, contains the supposed travels of Sir John Mandeville, who claimed to have visited Jerusalem in 1322.



Pl. 5. Jerusalem; Brussels, KB, 9823-4



Pl. 7. Jerusalem; Bruges, GS, 127/5, fol. 18r



Pl. 6. Jerusalem; The Hague, KB, 76 F5, fol. 1r



Pl. 8. Siege of Jerusalem; The Hague, Meermanno, 10 B 21, fol. 152v

were popular in the fourteenth century²². Such miniatures usually represent Jerusalem as a large walled city in side-view, besieged by Roman troops. A Flavius Josephus scene in an English Book of Hours of ca 1340 (London, BL, Egerton 2781, fol. 190r) shows the famous episode of women in the city eating their own children during a famine²³.

A Dutch manuscript dated 1332 containing a Middle-Dutch adaptation of Josephus' text by Jacob van Maerlant, called the *Wrake van Jerusalem* (Vengeance of Jerusalem), depicts a more elaborate siege of the city (The Hague, Meermannno, 10 B 21, fol. 152v.; Pl. 8)²⁴. The Roman besiegers, commanded by Titus, can be recognised because of the 'S.P.Q.R.' standard and the heraldic double-headed eagle, whereas some of the besieged Jews wear the typical Jewish conical hat. In both instances the city as represented has little to do with the skyline of the real Jerusalem; it is just a general representation of a medieval city and no attempt has been made to depict specific buildings²⁵.

Miniatures depicting the siege of Jerusalem during the First Crusade (1099) follow the same pattern of an unspecific walled city besieged by knights. A French late-thirteenth-century manuscript of *La chanson d'Antioche* (Paris, BNF, fr. 12558, fol. 143v) includes a representation of daily activities in Jerusalem, such as a man shoeing horses and a Crusader winnowing corn, as well as details of the assault of the city²⁶. A miniature in a manuscript of Jacob van Maerlant's *Spiegel Historiae* (Mirror of History), produced in Flanders in the first decades of the fourteenth century, also depicts the siege of Jerusalem in 1099 (The Hague, KB, KA XX, fol. 255r; Pl. 9)²⁷. It is conceivable that the domed building is meant to be the Temple, but the rest looks unspecific. The Crusaders succeeded in setting foot on the city walls with the help of a siege tower, as is accurately shown in the miniature. In the centre of the image Count Robrecht of Flanders is prominently shown climbing a ladder, which no doubt can be considered to be visual political propaganda in this Flemish manuscript. To the left of the besieged city stands an army of white knights commanded by St George, who can be identified by his halo and his traditional arms of a red cross on a white shield²⁸.

The Temple, along with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Tower of David became the principal architectural symbols of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem²⁹. In 1408 Richard Beauchamp, Earl of

Warwick, visited the Holy Land. A series of pen drawings of events in his life was made about 1485 to establish the glory of the Earls of Warwick³⁰. In one of the drawings, the Earl's arms are prominently displayed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where Richard kneels in prayer. All the architectural details are entirely Western, though.

Around 1442-43, five full-page miniatures were added to a manuscript produced ca 1410, which is now known as the Book of Hours of René d'Anjou³¹. At the time when these extra miniatures were painted, René had probably returned from a long stay in Naples. He had never been to Jerusalem, but had a special interest in the Holy City since he wanted to keep alive his claim to be King of Sicily and Jerusalem, a title which he had obtained in 1435. Hence René added the arms of Jerusalem to

²² A much older rendering of this theme can be found on the eighth-century ivory Frank's casket in the British Museum; see Smith 1997-1998, 185. For the illustrated Flavius Josephus manuscripts, see Deutsch 1986.

²³ Smith 1997-1998, 180-181.

²⁴ This miniature is discussed in great detail in Meuwese 2001, 96-100. I disagree with Smith 1997-1998, 192, who claims that the story of Mary of Bethzuba offering part of her roasted child to a rebel is represented in the upper right corner of the Meermannno miniature, since the dish clearly contains poultry instead of human remains.

²⁵ Other representations of Titus either besieging Jerusalem or inside the city in *Rijmbijbel* manuscripts are: Brussels, KB, 15001, fol. 165r; Groningen, UB, 405, fol. 163r; London, BL, Add. 10045 fol. 137r; The Hague, KB, KA XVIII, fol. 141r; and in the Middle-Dutch *Historiebijbel* manuscripts: The Hague, KB, 69 B 10, fol. 215v; The Hague, KB, 78 D 38, fol. 133v. For the illustrations in the *Rijmbijbel* manuscripts see Meuwese 2001.

²⁶ Mat Immerzeel kindly drew my attention to an early fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Histoire d'Outremer*, (Paris, BNF, fr. 352), representing the siege of Jerusalem at the First Crusade (fols 61r, 62r) and a depiction of the interior of the church of the Holy Sepulchre at the Entombment on fol. 62r.

²⁷ See Janssens/Meuwese 1997, Meuwese 2001, and Meuwese 2005.

²⁸ This detail derives from the siege of Antioch, see Meuwese 2005.

²⁹ Alexander 1997-1998, 261, argues that the image in the Bible of Stephen Harding, made in Cîteaux ca 1109, showing King David enthroned in a fortified tower from the turrets of which armed knights repel attackers, symbolically alludes to the Tower of David (see his Fig. 8). Thus the monks of Cîteaux could see themselves as spiritual soldiers fighting evil.

³⁰ London, BL, Julius E IV, fol. 209r. See Sinclair 2003.

³¹ See Reynaud 1989, 32-34; Catalogue Brugge 1994, no. 122; Alexander 1997-1998, 258; Smeyers 1999, 264-265.



Pl. 9. Siege of Jerusalem; The Hague, KB, KA XX, fol. 255r



Pl. 10. Jerusalem; London, BL, Egerton 1070, fol. 5r



Pl. 11. Jerusalem and surroundings; Vienna, ÖNB, ser. nov. 12710, fol. 2v

his own family heraldry and had his new coat of arms depicted on a miniature facing a view of the Holy City, which is part of the same added bifolium (London, BL, Egerton 1070, fol. 5r; Pl. 10). The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Dome of the Rock occupy a prominent place in this cityscape. Jonathan Alexander drew attention to an odd detail in this illustration: in the building to the right a tree seems to grow out of the masonry³². Could this be a reference to a specific building, perhaps to the house of St Anne, the mother of the Virgin, from which she would have been married? Her house was believed to be in the vicinity of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Or was there actually such a tree in the masonry at the time? This miniature, which is currently attributed to Barthélemy van Eyck, could be modelled upon a drawing made by Jan van Eyck during the latter's mission to the Holy Land in 1436³³.

A more panoramic view of Jerusalem and its immediate surroundings serves to illustrate a description of the city in the *Historiologium Brabantinorum* by Johannes Gielemans (Vienna, ÖNB, ser. nov. 12710, fol. 2v; Pl. 11)³⁴. This miniature of ca 1480 in a manuscript produced for the Flemish Rooklooster Convent features inscriptions to the Holy Sites, just as on the earlier maps. This miniature probably had a similar function as the Matthew Paris maps in the twelfth century: both were made for monks with the primary aim of a spiritual pilgrimage. It is remarkable that the south is represented at the top and that the Temple is prominently placed in the centre of the city. Golgotha and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre can also be discerned. On the central tower in the foreground stands Duke Godfrey of Bouillon, who is being crowned King of Jerusalem by an angel. This explicit reference to the First Crusade, and the local hero Godfrey no doubt also had a political agenda. The prominent positioning of this earlier hero from local stock on the north wall may again refer to the place where the Crusaders invaded the city, as was marked with a cross on the twelfth-century pilgrimage map. This configuration with a 'spotlight' on Godfrey on the North wall in the foreground, might also explain why this panoramic view of Jerusalem by way of exception shows the south at the top.

CONCLUSION

What was the purpose of these medieval Western depictions of Jerusalem? It can be concluded that

the main function of the medieval world maps was to invite reflection on God's omnipotence and that they were didactic in this spiritual sense. That the world maps also convey geographical information was of secondary importance. Regarding the maps of the Holy Land, again, the spiritual emphasis is on a place to be reached after a long and dangerous journey. The city maps of Jerusalem, which present a mixture of biblical history and topographical reality, also make it very clear that they were not primarily intended as accurate pilgrim guides. The city plan as a perfect circle subdivided by a cross clearly is loaded with Christian symbolism; it does not pretend to represent the actual outline of the city wall, nor does the pattern of straight streets match the winding alleys of Jerusalem as the Crusaders knew them. Even the maker of the strikingly realistic Cambrai map, who may have had first-hand experience of the city, did not aim to provide a topographically accurate map.

Hence these representations of Jerusalem in the medieval West usually tell us more about the people who made or used these images and about their spiritual and political interests, than they do about the historical Jerusalem. The images are often clearly meant to be both a representation of the real and the ideal city: the Heavenly Jerusalem.

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³² Alexander 1997-1998, 258-259 draws attention to the same detail in Giotto's fresco in the Arena Chapel at Padua, representing the return from the marriage of the Virgin (Fig. 5 in his article).

³³ See Smeyers 1999, 265. Otto Pächt was convinced that the miniature had been painted by René himself; scholars currently attribute the painting to Barthélemy van Eyck.

³⁴ See Smeyers 1999, 270. Another miniature representing the city and some of the main buildings illustrates a description of Jerusalem in a manuscript of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, illuminated in Bruges before 1487 (St Petersburg, National Library, Fr.F.v.XIV.1, fol. 36r). See Voronova/Sterligov 1996, Fig. 373.

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The Wall Paintings in the Church of Mar Elian at Homs: A 'Restoration Project' of a Nineteenth-Century Palestinian Master

Mat IMMERZEEL

To my father, Arij Immerzeel († 26 January 2005)

The most prominent Christian building in Homs, the antique city of Emesa in Syria, is the Greek Orthodox Church of Mar Elian. The reputation of this fairly modern three-aisled construction, with apses and a dome, is based upon the presence of the relics of the holy doctor Elian, or Julian, from Homs, which are kept inside a marble sarcophagus inside the south apse. The eyes of today's visitors are irresistibly drawn to the impressive neo-Byzantine paintings made by the Romanian artists Gavril and Miha Morasan, whose work concluded the renovation of the church in the early 1970s¹. In May 1970, while cleaning the walls before applying a fresh layer of plaster, wall paintings came to light inside and near the south apse, which were soon after restored by the Syrian Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums. Following the inauguration of the church in 1974, Gabriel Saadé dedicated an instructive booklet to St Elian, the church and its ancient and modern art². The main source for the discoveries is, however, Jules Leroy's study of 1975³. Unfortunately, Leroy did not have the opportunity to observe the wall paintings from nearby; the matter of distinguishing the different layers of paintings and, subsequently, also their chronology, therefore deserves further consideration.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PAINTINGS

A. Apse (Fig.1)

The apse consists of a half-dome resting on the north, east and south walls and on two smaller conches in the northeast and southeast corners. On their discovery, only fragmented images appeared from underneath the plaster. Recognisable are a *Deisis* in the half-dome, a row of apostles and evangelists on the side walls and in the corners, and above them on each side-wall, a rectangular field with the portraits of two prophets. In between these rectangles is a horizontal band with a continuous

W-shaped pattern in red, blue and white. The construction of a central niche in the east wall in the 1950s led to the loss of the then still hidden decoration on this spot⁴. All that remains is the central arch of a tripartite arcade.

The palette is limited to dark-blue for all backgrounds, red for the borders separating the different fields, white, blue, red, and red-brown for the clothes of the figures, and yellow for their haloes.

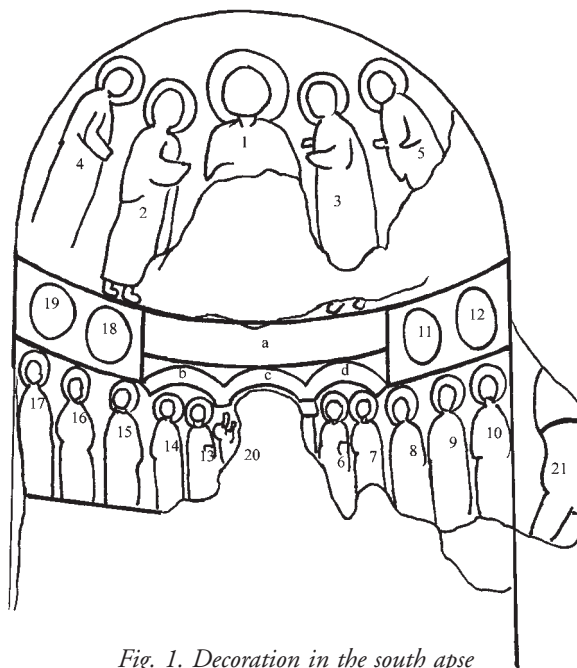


Fig. 1. Decoration in the south apse

¹ Saadé 1974, 40-43.

² Saadé 1974, 37-43, Pls II-III.

³ Leroy 1975, 99-106, Figs 4-13; see also: Cruikshank Dodd 1992, 1 n. 1; *idem* 2001, xvii n. 8, 45; Immerzeel/Innemée/Mommers 1998, 64; Peña 2000, 124-125; Velmans 1988, 372-375, Fig. 1; *idem* 1994, Figs 1-6; *idem* 1999, 62, Fig. 54; *idem* 2000, 157-159; Zayat 2000, 10; Balicka-Witakowski et alii 2001, 222.

⁴ Saadé 1974, 40.

Names are mentioned in Arabic and Greek inscriptions painted in white. Large parts of the murals are faded, or have entirely disappeared. At some point, the images were covered with plaster; for a better fixation of the covering, holes were cut into the decorated surfaces. Perhaps part of the more serious damage was also inflicted on this occasion.

A.1. Half-dome (Pl. 1)

Christ, the central figure, is depicted sitting on his throne, traces of which are visible at the bottom right, raising his right hand in a speaking gesture and holding an opened book in his left (Fig. 1, no. 1). The inscription near his head reads IC XC. To the left of his throne the feet of a cherub are discernible, while scanty traces of a second one remain to the right. To the left of Christ stands the Virgin (no. 2; MP ΘC), to the right, St John the Baptist (no. 3; ΙΩ). The identity of the other two saints, beardless and with short, dark-brown hair, is not revealed in inscriptions (nos 4, 5). All turn and stretch their hands towards Christ. The background is embellished with white stars and, beside Christ's halo, the

moon and sun. The lower part of the image has been almost entirely lost, in particular the centre and the right half of the composition. During the restoration, this damaged area and all gaps were filled in and painted in somewhat lighter colours, while the left half of the throne was drawn in outline. An open spot to the left of St John's knees displays an older layer of plaster, intentionally left in this state, as impressions of *tesserae* demonstrate that the earliest decoration of the half-dome consisted of a mosaic. A hardly legible Greek inscription runs over the full length of the red border line below the half-dome. Leroy succeeded in deciphering the date 1811 *Ména Phebrouariou* ('the month of February'), below the Virgin, providing a clue to the chronology (Pl. 6).

A.2. Lower zone (Pls 2-6)

The tripartite arcade painted above the niche and in the conches is adorned with a vine-scroll pattern, white fruits and red flowers set against a greyish background (b-d). In the left part of the arcade, a dark-blue background and a W-shaped pattern



Pl. 1. Half-dome of the apse

similar to that above the arches shines through this decoration (Pl. 5). Two partly preserved painted columns with capitals support the arches; in front of the left one, the upper body of a small person looking upward and raising his hands can be discerned (no. 20; Pl. 5). Other figurative elements are four cherubim flanking the arcade, and, below the central arch, the tip of a red wing, presumably of a heavenly creature belonging to the now lost central scene on the east wall.

All figures are identified in partly legible bilingual inscriptions. The evangelists in the southeast corner are Mark and Matthew, and here, too, the background is adorned with stars (ΜΑΡΚΟΣ Ο ΕΒΑΝΓΕΛΙΣΤΗΣ; ΜΑΘΘΕΟΣ; nos 6, 7; Pls 2, 3). The apostles on the south wall are identified as Andrew, James (?) and Thomas (ΘΟΜΑΣ; nos 8-10). They are depicted frontally, raise their right hand in a speaking gesture, and hold either *codices* (the evangelists) or scrolls (the apostles) in their left. This composition is repeated on the opposite side, showing the evangelists, John (Ο ΕΒΑΝΓΕΛΙΣΤΗΣ...) and Luke (nos 13, 14), and the apostles Philip (ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΣ...),

Simon (ΣΙΜΩΝ, called Paul in Arabic) and Bartholomew (ΒΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΑΙΟΣ; nos 15-17; Pls 5, 6). The lower part of the apostles has almost entirely disappeared. Those on the north wall were not rendered in full length, as a red line just below their waists marks the edge of the painting. This line is lacking on the opposite wall.

The red-bordered medallions on the south side contain the portraits of the Kings Salomon (Ο [Π]ΡΟ[ΦΙΤΙ] ΣΟΛΩΜΟΝ; Arabic: Salomon the Wise) and David (ΔΑΒΙΔ; nos 11, 12; Pl. 4). Both are crowned and hold an opened scroll with a text in Arabic. Only the first words of Salomon's text remain, reading: 'Wisdom has built ...' (Proverbs IX, 1). The prophets at their opposite are Jeremiah (Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΙΕΡΕΜΙΑΣ) and Isaiah (Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ ΙΣΑΙΑΣ; nos 18, 19; Pl. 6). The text on Isaiah's scroll reads: 'A voice is calling in the desert: prepare the way of the Lord' (Isaiah XL 3-5); that on Jeremiah's: 'The Virgin will give birth to a child, that will be called Emmanuel' (Isaiah VII, 14). Cherubim with two or four red wings fill the space in between the medallions.



Pl. 2. South wall of the apse



Pl. 3. South side: Sts Mark and Matthew



Pl. 4. South wall: King Solomon and King David



Pl. 5. North wall of the apse



Pl. 6. North wall: the Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah

Evidently the present decoration is the result of different painting campaigns. Some damaged parts were retouched in 1970, but many elements, e.g. the faces and clothes, were repainted prior to the plastering of the walls. The most obvious spot displaying the two phases is the left arch, where vine-scrolls have been applied over the older W-shaped motif. A second example will be given below. To distinguish the original paintings from the later work, the first is indicated as layer 1, the second as layer 2.

B. East and south walls

On the east wall to the right of the apse is a fragment showing the foreleg of a light-brown horse, turned towards the apse, apparently that of an equestrian saint (no. 21, Pl. 7). On the south wall of the nave, immediately to the right of the former horseman, the image of St Abraham remains (O A[ΓΙΟC] ABPAAM; Pl. 8). Only the upper part of his body is rendered, turned to the left and with both hands slightly raised. The saint has white hair and beard, a blue tunic and red mantle, and a black outline with white dots surrounding his yellow halo. Below are traces of a second person and the beginning of an inscription reading: OA[ΓΙΟC] CA[?..]. Possible interpretations of this name are Saba or Isaac. St Abraham is placed against a dark-blue background with a red border. Above his head, part of a broad horizontal frieze remains, consisting of alternating red squares and a white-toothed red disk inside a blue circle. The background of this panel consists of a pink and red stone-like structure, also present to the right of the saint below. Although the image of St Abraham was slightly retouched in 1970, nothing indicates an earlier repainting or intentional cutting. Apparently these fragments were not noticed by the painter of

layer 2, implying that these fragments are surviving elements of layer 1.

LAYER 1: THE MEDIEVAL DECORATION

In distinguishing the two layers, the figure of St Abraham is crucial. Outstanding characteristics are the fairly flat rendering of his face, hands and dress, and the outlines and pleats drawn with slightly darker lines. By contrast, the details of the apse paintings display a more plastic execution. The faces are shaded with darker paint and highlighted with narrow white brush strokes, which also appear on their clothes. Their features differ from those of St Abraham in the smaller oval-shaped eyes and long, small noses. At least one saint inside the apse has not been entirely repainted. The brushwork of St Matthew's red tunic is similar to the dress of St Abraham (Pl. 3) and should therefore belong to layer 1, while the white outline of this figure, partly overlapping the background, the highlighting and his head are later additions. It is to be expected that a more detailed analysis will reveal more of such distinct details inside the apse.

The first scholars who analysed the murals had noticed the repainting. Bashir Zouhdi dated layer 1 to the twelfth or thirteenth century and surmised that the Arabic inscriptions were added to the repainting, yet he supposed that the images were covered by the end of the Mamluk period⁵. Leroy agreed with this point of view, although he was puzzled by the rather recent date in the inscription: 'À un endroit on croit pouvoir lire 181(1) Ména Phebrouariou. Si la lecture est bonne, il ne peut s'agir que d'une date de restauration, car la présence des chiffres arabes, le style général de la peinture s'opposent à une date d'exécution aussi récente.'⁶ Eventually he inclined towards a medieval date: 'Rien n'est ici caractéristique de la peinture de l'époque des croisades. Toutefois, si l'on considère le mouvement de cette période qui se manifeste dans la peinture, on n'hésitera guère à lui attribuer aussi cette magnifique fresque.'⁷ In more recent publications, however, the date and evidence for repainting were entirely neglected, resulting in oversimplified, if not erroneous, perceptions of the origins of the artists and the dating. Tania Velmans took Leroy's 'Crusader connection' for granted⁸, while Ewa Balicka-Witakowski alleged that the representations were executed by Syrian artists, working under a Western master⁹.

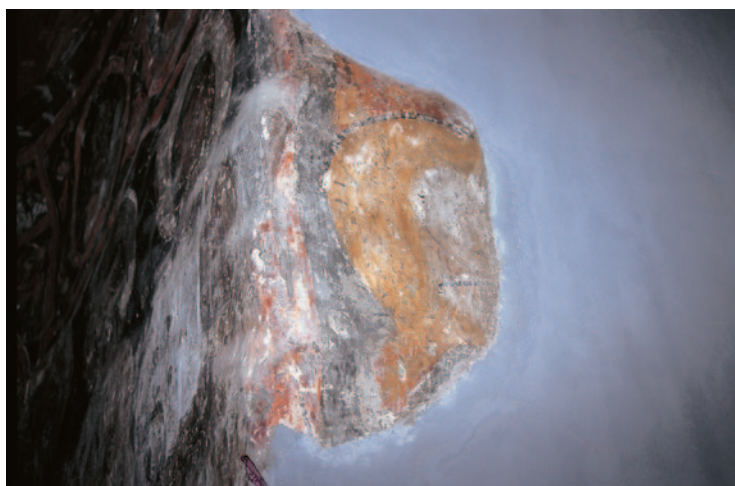
⁵ Curator of the National Museum, Damascus, quoted in: Saadé 1974, 38-39.

⁶ Leroy 1975, 100.

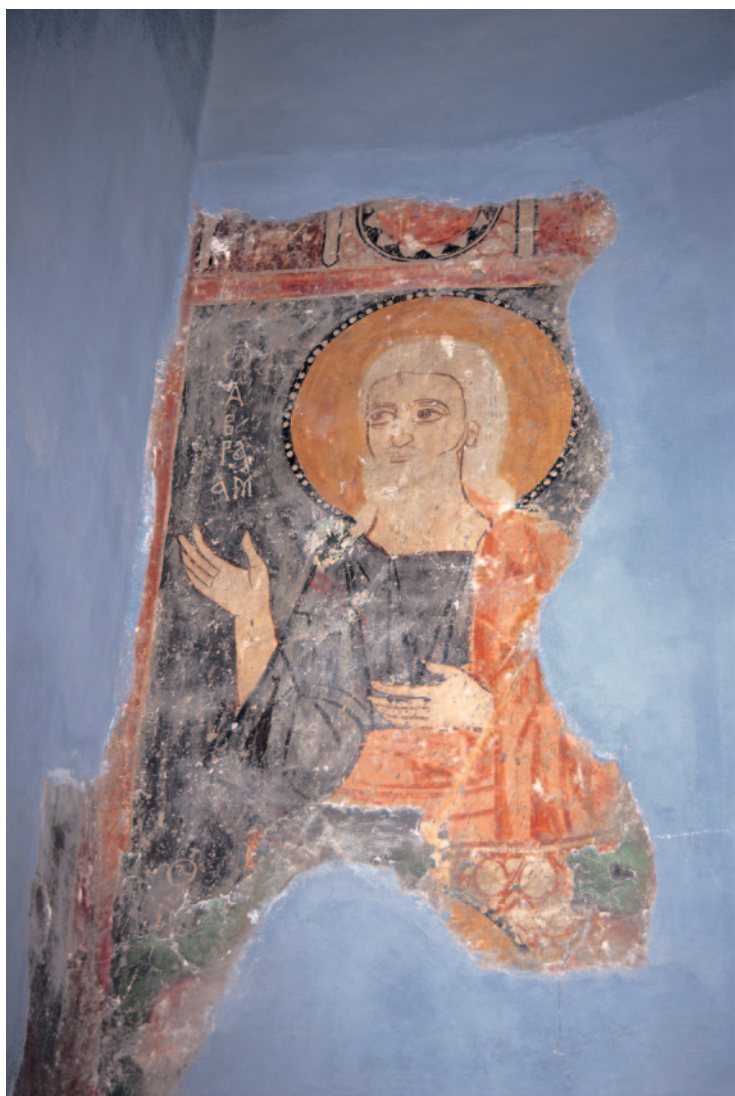
⁷ Leroy 1975, 104-105.

⁸ Velmans 1999, 62; see also Velmans 2000, 159 ('Trotz der vermutlich für der Bevölkerung bestimmten griechischen und arabischen Inschriften erlauben die vorangehenden Beobachtungen die Behauptung, dass es sich um einen Künstler aus dem lateinischen Kulturkreis handelte, der bezüglich der Ikonographie durch seine neue Umgebung beeinflusst wurde').

⁹ Balicka-Witakowski et alii 2001, 222.



Pl. 7. East wall of the nave: fragment of a horse



Pl. 8. South wall of the nave: St Abraham

In this matter, the analysis of Erica Cruikshank Dodd, who had the advantage of having studied more wall paintings in Syria and Lebanon than any of the scholars quoted, is more clarifying:

The paintings of St. Elian in Homs belong to a second layer of fresco, painted over an earlier scheme of decoration. This second layer, moreover, was at some time radically restored and repainted. It is not clear whether this restoration was conducted recently when the frescoes were uncovered by the Department of Antiquities, or in the nineteenth century. In this connection, Leroy (ibid., p. 100) read an inscription giving February 1811 as a possible date of restoration. In either case, whether restored in the 19th or 20th century, the style of painting is radically altered from the originals. One painting only, the small head of St. Abraham (ibid., fig. 12), inexplicably escaped restoration and apparently remained untouched. The style of this single figure is notably different from the other paintings in the church, but from its iconography it belongs in the same scheme. The style of St. Abraham, indeed, is strikingly similar to the style of the other paintings from Qara, in SS. Sergios and Bacchos, and the Monastery of Mar Yacub. This fact suggests that the restoration, however clumsy, follows the original program in the other frescoes as well. In this case, the iconography depicted in the church today is likely that of the original program of the twelfth century.¹⁰

One can only but agree with these conclusions. The nineteenth-century 'restorers' intended to revitalise the by then already partly destroyed apse decoration. Nevertheless, they largely respected the

existing iconography, which contains sufficient elements to confirm its medieval origin. The presence of a cherub in the *Deisis* scene points to a variant called *Deisis-Vision*, combining the common intercession of the Virgin and St John the Baptist with the visionary apparition of Christ. This was a familiar apse subject in churches on the Eastern periphery of the Byzantine Empire¹¹, e.g. in Deir Mar Musa al-Habashi near Nebek¹² and Deir Mar Ya'qub near Qara (Syria)¹³, and in Deir Mar Mitri and Deir Saydet Hamatur – both in Qusba –, Rashkida, Kfar Shleiman, Bahdeidat, Qassuba, and Qannubin (Lebanon)¹⁴. Enigmatic, however, is the addition of two anonymous saints to the *Deisis-Vision* in Homs (Pl. 1). Their youthful appearance suggests their being angels, left wingless on their repainting, perhaps because they were not recognized as such. This interpretation finds confirmation in the presence of two angels near the Virgin in the *Deisis* scene in Saydet Hamatur, depicted in the same attitude as the left person in the Church of Mar Elian¹⁵. As to the row of apostles and evangelists below the *Deisis-Vision*, these are also rendered in the Church of Mar Tadros in Bahdeidat¹⁶. Furthermore, Byzantine examples of prophets depicted in medallions are numerous¹⁷, while equestrian saints were an almost indispensable theme in Levantine church decoration (see below), but representations of Abraham as an isolated saint are rare. He is rendered with his hands raised in a medallion on the right wall of the presbytery in the Cathedral of Cefalù in Sicily (1148-1170), with Melchizedek at his opposite¹⁸. The interpretation of the partly preserved name of the person below St Abraham in Homs is still open to debate. Should he be St Saba of Jerusalem, then there is nothing particular about his presence in a medieval programme, and if the reading of the name as Isaac is correct, the connection with Abraham speaks for itself¹⁹.

The medieval decorative elements in Homs do also have their counterparts in Byzantine murals. The W-shaped pattern below the conch and in the arches is to be found in, among others, the Church of St George in Kurbino, Macedonia (1191)²⁰. Finally, the remarkable pink and red structure near St Abraham is characteristic for the rendering of stone structures in the Eastern Mediterranean from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, e.g. in Deir Mar Musa and several churches in Lebanon²¹.

¹⁰ Cruikshank Dodd 2001, xvii n. 8.

¹¹ Cruikshank Dodd 2004, 34-36; Hérou 1998; Velmans 1999, 57-62.

¹² Cruikshank Dodd 2001, 41-42, 130, Pl. 16.

¹³ Schmidt/Westphalen 2005, in print.

¹⁴ Cruikshank Dodd 2004, 34-36, nos 4, 6, 14, 17, 19, 22, 26; Hérou 1998 (Deir Mar Mitri, Bahdeidat).

¹⁵ Cruikshank Dodd 2004, 210, Pl. 6.11; Nordiguan/Voisin 1999, 233, 388.

¹⁶ Cruikshank Dodd 2004, no. 20; Hérou 1998, 41-42.

¹⁷ E.g. in Deir Mar Mitri at Qusba, Lebanon (Cruikshank Dodd 2004, 48, no. 4).

¹⁸ Borsook 1998², 10, Pls 9, 11.

¹⁹ Abraham and Isaac are depicted in medallions in the Cathedral of Monreale (1176); Borsook 1998², 64, Pls 57, 68, 69, 103.

²⁰ Velmans 1999, Taf. 67.

²¹ Cruikshank Dodd 2004, 86.

In his appearance and colours St Abraham recalls the paintings of layer 3 in Deir Mar Musa from ca 1200²² and in the two churches in Qara, referred to by Cruikshank Dodd, both from before 1266²³. These murals are expressive exponents of the 'Syrian style' of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, distinguishing wall paintings executed by local ateliers from those made by Byzantine masters, active in the Levant²⁴. To resume, layer 1 should date to the second half of the twelfth century or the first half of the thirteenth, with, however, the sixties of that century as the ultimate limit. After 1260, the Mongol raids and the military campaigns of the Mamluk army disturbed the until then relatively peaceful life in West Syria, and it is more than probable that the flourishing of Christian art in this region had by then come to an end²⁵.

LAYER 2: THE WORK OF A NINETEENTH-CENTURY MASTER

The mention of the year 1811 in the inscription suggests that the paintings of layer 2 were executed in the early nineteenth century. Comparing them to contemporary works of art should be the right approach for confirmation of this dating, but unfortunately, no other Syrian or Lebanese murals from this period have come down to us. By contrast, there was an abundant production of icons and related objects.

In the late Ottoman period, the Middle Eastern tradition of icon-painting came to a flourish as, for centuries, it had not. This artistic renaissance reflects the emancipation of the Eastern Christian communities as well as the inherent participation of Christians in economic and social life. In Aleppo, a major trading centre at that time, the al-Musawwir family formed the backbone of the so-called 'School of Aleppo'²⁶. Since this workshop was active between 1645 and 1777, its involvement in the decoration of the apse can be excluded. Furthermore, the primitive style of the murals is in no way reminiscent of the elaborate neo-Cretan tradition reflected in the Aleppine icons. Stylistic arguments also exclude the involvement of Michael, an artist from Crete who worked in Lebanon and Syria between 1809 and 1821²⁷. Michael Polychronis al-Kreti produced an impressive quantity of abundantly ornamented icons painted in a neo-Cretan style, which for several decades would be the predominant fashion in the region. His influence resounds in the icons of

Nemeh Nasr al-Homsi, preserved in different churches in the area north of Damascus, but Nemeh cannot be held responsible for the paintings in his hometown, Homs, as he was not active before the middle of the nineteenth century²⁸.

A more constructive approach is to turn our eyes toward the artistic tradition of Jerusalem. Countless works of art in the Middle East betray a Palestinian background, but they have not yet been subject to systematic study, except for some icons from the second half of the nineteenth century²⁹. In 1860, tensions between Christians and Muslims in the region flared up, resulting in the destruction of churches and the loss of many icons. After the situation had calmed down, the destroyed sanctuaries were rebuilt, while the production of new icons was entrusted to artists, with the adjective 'al-Qudsi' (from the Holy City) or 'al-Urshalimi' (from Jerusalem), in their name. Apparently, the availability of local artists was so limited, that the church authorities had to turn to Jerusalem to meet their needs of new icons. This would have been impossible without the existence of a firmly established painting tradition in that city.

In contrast to artists active in Syria, Palestinian icon painters had the advantage of working in an area that had always attracted Christian pilgrims, who, as genuine 'souvenir hunters', formed a grateful clientele for icon workshops³⁰. This guarantee of potential customers resulted in the flourishing of a souvenir industry, the existence of which can be ascertained by, amongst others, a number of dated *proskynetaria*³¹. Regarding the date of 1811

²² Whereas Cruikshank Dodd prefers the Seleucid year 1504 (A.D. 1192/93; Cruikshank Dodd 2001, 170), Dall'Oglio reads A.H. 604 (A.D. 1208; Dall'Oglio 1998, 16).

²³ For the discussion on their chronology see: Schmidt/Westphalen 2005, 34-37, 120-124.

²⁴ Cruikshank Dodd 2001, 104-124; see also *idem* 2004, 95-96.

²⁵ Immerzeel 2005a, 179-181.

²⁶ Agémian 1969; 106-113; *idem* 1993, 172-179; Immerzeel 1997, 25-26.

²⁷ Agémian 1969, 116-122; *idem* 1993, 179-180; Immerzeel 1997, 26.

²⁸ Agémian 1969, 122, 124-125; Immerzeel 1997, 26-27.

²⁹ Agémian 1969, 122-124; *idem* 1993, 180-181; Immerzeel 1997, 27; Skalova/Gabra 2003, 145-148.

³⁰ Immerzeel 1999, 53-54; Immerzeel 2005b.

³¹ Meinardus 1967; Immerzeel 1999 and 2004c, with further references. See also the contributions on *proskynetaria* in this volume.



Pl. 9. Decoration of the haykal in Deir Abu Sefein, Cairo

mentioned in the Church of Mar Elia, the specimen in Hernen Castle (1832), discussed elsewhere in this volume, is an outstanding work of art for reference. The simplified features of its representations typify the popular character of the Palestinian production in the period under consideration. The reduced size of the scenes hinders a detailed comparison, but the limitation of the palette to the primary colours red, blue and yellow, touched up with narrow darker brushstrokes and highlights, certainly recalls the paintings in Homs.

The products of one nineteenth-century artist from Jerusalem have been relatively well studied. He signed his icons with 'Anastasi' or 'Astasi al-Rumi al-Qudsi' (Anastasius the Greek from the Holy City), and worked on behalf of the Coptic Orthodox community in Cairo between 1832 and 1871³². His art displays the same artistic naivety as contemporary *proskynetaria*, betraying his formative years in a Palestinian artistic environment. Illustrative is Anastasi's contribution to the decoration of the *haykal* in the main Church of St Mercurius (Deir Abu Sefein) in Old Cairo, one of his most monumental works³³. This project had been inaugurated by the eighteenth-century Coptic artist, Ibrahim al-Nasikh, who painted the central niche with the image of Christ Enthroned and decorated the canopy above the altar³⁴. To this, Anastasi added the twelve apostles, painted on panels fixed to the walls beside Ibrahim's Christ (Pl. 9). He also decorated the half-dome with a Christ, carried by two angels, executed mainly in red and blue, a rare example of his abilities as a mural painter. Compared to the paintings in Homs, these works of art betray a more skilled hand, yet in the choice of colours and the simplicity of the execution, both incontestably have their roots in the same tradition.

Anastasi was not the only Palestinian painter who earned his money abroad. Isa from Jerusalem decorated the wooden canopy in the chapel of the Monastery of St Sergius and St Bacchus in Ma'alula (Syria), dated 1824 (Pls 10, 11)³⁵. Once more, the execution is fully Palestinian, although it is more sophisticated than in Anastasi's icons and the paintings in the Church of Mar Elia. Not only are the cherubim on the outside of the canopy similar to those in Homs (Pls 4, 6), their features also resemble several faces inside the church, e.g. those of the prophets (Pls 4, 6), in particular, the shape of the noses and eyes, and the shadows. Other Palestinian

icons in churches in the Middle East may have been brought there by pilgrims returning from Jerusalem, e.g. a specimen in the Monastery of St Thecla in Ma'alula with St George killing the dragon, St Nicholas, the Prophet Elijah with the decapitated head of a Baal priest, St Saba (?), and the Archangel Michael holding a soul (Pl. 12). An icon of the Last Judgement in the Monastery of the Virgin at Saydnaya is dated 1854 (Pl. 13). Despite its advanced date, it still displays the same style and colours that typify the Palestinian icon-production in the previous decades. In conclusion, there is little doubt about the Palestinian origin of the master who was responsible for the paintings of layer 2 in the Church of Mar Elia.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE BUILDING

As the building history of the church has not yet been subject to profound research, little can be said about the connection between the architecture and the successive layers of decoration. Nevertheless, some indicative details are revealed in hagiographic sources. The life of St Elia has come down to us in two Georgian manuscripts (ninth and tenth century respectively) and in an Arabic version (seventeenth century)³⁶. His martyrdom occurred in A.D. 284-285. After being tortured and left for dead, Elia dragged himself to a cave used as a potter's workshop, where he supposedly died on February 6, 285. His remains were brought to safety, but, according to the Arabic version, the relics were returned to the cave on April 15, 432, soon after which, Bishop Paul of Homs erected a church there³⁷. Should this assessment of the age of this

³² Jeudy 2004, 75-76; Meinardus 1968; Van Moorsel/Immerzeel/Langen 1994, 52-55.

³³ Butler 1884, Vol. I, 112; Zibawi 2003, 209, Fig. 281.

³⁴ Jeudy 2004, 70-75, Pls 4, 5. For Ibrahim al-Nasikh and Yuhanna Armani al-Qudsi see: van Moorsel/Immerzeel/Langen 1994, 16-47; Skalova/Gabra 2004, 137-140; Tribe 2003.

³⁵ Jeudy 2004, 76 n. 27.

³⁶ Ninth century: included in the *Legendier d'Ivion*; tenth century: mss no. 95, Library of the Archeological Museum of Tiflis; seventeenth century: Bibliothèque Orientale, Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut; Saadé 1974, 6-7. More recent is the hagiography in Arabic, written by Father 'Issa As'ad (1928). According to the author he based himself upon a manuscript from before 1492, which, however, could not be traced (Saadé 1974, 7-8).

³⁷ Peeters 1929, 64-65; Saadé 1974, 28 n. 1.



Pl. 10. Canopy; 1824; Monastery of St Sergius, Ma'alula



Pl. 11. Detail of Pl. 10

martyrion (?) concern the present building, this would shed some light on the evidence for a mosaic being the earliest decoration of the half-dome. This argument dates the south-eastern part of the present construction and the mosaic to pre-Islamic times (fifth-seventh century).

An object furnishing additional arguments for such an early date is St Elia's tomb³⁸. It is actually a late antique sarcophagus with a gabled lid, provided with rounded knobs at its corners. The decoration of the coffin consists of mouldings at the top and bottom and crosses in low relief. Its shape is common for sarcophagi produced in the quarries of Proconnesus on the Island of Marmara, an origin supported by a macroscopic determination of the stone used, a coarse-grained white marble with parallel grey bands³⁹. Such sarcophagi were produced up to the sixth century, yet there are indications for this particular piece being a spoil from the third century. Many sarcophagi from the quarries of Proconnesus were exported as semi-products to different areas over the Eastern Mediterranean. In the quarries, the coffins were hollowed out and provided with pre-shaped patterns on the outside. A widespread model was the so-called garland-sarcophagus. In their quarry state, the geometric design consisted of three semicircular shapes with a central roundel, in between four rectangular fields



Pl. 12. Icon; 19th century; Monastery of St Thecla, Ma'alula



Pl. 13. Icon; 1854; Monastery of the Virgin, Saydnaya

³⁸ Căndea 1972, 234 n. 3, Fig. 6; Koch 2000, 578-579, Abb. 86, T. 208. The measurements are 2.32 × 1.35 × 1.06 m. See also the (inaccurate) painting reproduced in Peña 2000, 71.

³⁹ Immerzeel 1996, 28-29; Ward-Perkins 1992, 154; Koch 2000, 578.



Pl. 14. Semi-fabricated garland-sarcophagus; third century; National Museum, Damascus

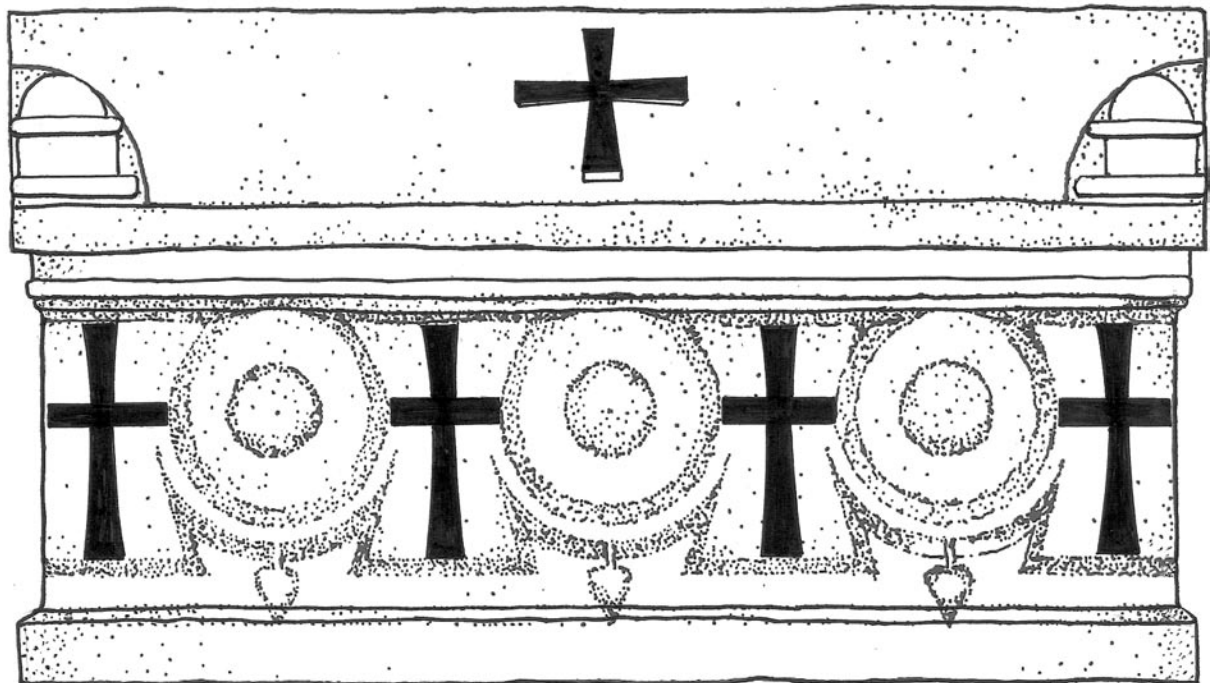


Fig. 2. Tomb of St Elian; reconstruction of the original reliefs

on the front and reverse sides, providing the framework for garlands hung between animals' heads or human figures, with a mask or floral design in the centre (Fig. 2; Pl. 14). One pre-shaped garland was placed on each small panel. Once at their destination, local sculptors should have finished the carving, but actually the sarcophagi were often used as they were⁴⁰. Seemingly, centuries after its first funerary use, one of such semi-produced garland-sarcophagi was taken to Homs and finished. The sculpting procedure follows from the shapes and number of crosses on each side. On the front, the four rectangular fields formed the basis for four crosses with long stems. (Fig. 2). The execution of the back and end panels was somewhat different; the roundels inside the garlands were turned into small Greek crosses. The mouldings received their final shape, all superfluous elements were removed, and finally the surface was smoothened. In their quarry state, the gabled lids were provided with *acroteria* at the corners, which, on the lid of St Elian's tomb, were elaborated as knobs. The cross in the centre of the slanting front panel was created by removing a few centimetres of marble from the surface.

The shape of the long-stemmed crosses on the front, with arms expanding to the ends, could well be indicative for the period of reuse of this sarcophagus. One inclines to designate them as 'Latin crosses', but this suggestive term diverts from the fact that this model was also well known in the early Eastern tradition⁴¹. Therefore, the suggestion of the

decoration being applied on the occasion of the alleged transportation of the saint's relics to the present site, or not long thereafter, is a serious option.

The style of the representation of St Abraham and the iconography of the apse decoration demonstrate that layer 1 was applied in the second half of the twelfth, or first half of the thirteenth century. The reason for this redecoration may have been irreparable damage to the mosaic, perhaps as a result of the heavy earthquake that hit Syria in 1159⁴². The French traveller, Jean de Thévenot, who visited Homs in 1658, mentioned the church and the marble tomb of Mar Elian in the account of his stay in the Levant⁴³. Unfortunately, he did not write about the paintings, but this omission certainly does not imply that they were by then already hidden from view. Nothing is reported about any works executed in the early nineteenth century, when the paintings of layer 2 were applied, but according to 'Issa As'ad the church was enlarged in 1843⁴⁴. Presumably, all representations visible at that time were intentionally damaged and entirely covered with plaster, only about three decades after the apse decoration had been restored. Resuming, this brings us to the following provisional chronology:

1. Fifth-seventh century (after 432?): construction of the church; application of a mosaic in the apse; decoration of the sarcophagus.
2. Second half of the twelfth/first half of the thirteenth century: the mosaic is replaced by paintings; the nave is decorated as well (layer 1).
3. 1811: the apse decoration is repainted (layer 2).
4. 1843: reconstruction/enlargement of the building and covering of the murals with a layer of plaster.
5. 1970: discovery and conservation of the paintings. Empty spots are filled in with somewhat lighter colours.
6. 1973: the remaining surfaces of the church interior are decorated.

THE EQUESTRIAN SAINT

As the fragment of an equestrian saint is not mentioned in other publications, it deserves some additional attention (Pl. 7). Actually, the presence of this theme in Homs is hardly surprising, as holy riders were common in the decoration of churches in the Middle East, in particular in Lebanon and Syria⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ For such semi-products found in Lebanon and Syria, see: Ward Perkins 1992.

⁴¹ A similar cross is, for instance, represented on a sixth-century gem in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Inv. 26.07 (Catalogue Frankfurt 1983, no. 174).

⁴² Saadé 1974, 31.

⁴³ J. de Thévenot, *Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant*, Paris 1964, 446.

⁴⁴ For the renovation, this author refers to a manuscript, very likely present in the church library ('Issa As'ad 1928, 249, quoted in Saadé 1974, 33 n. 2). The work started on September 18, and lasted 45 days. One wonders if this short period would have been sufficient for extending the small building, according to 'Issa As'ad, to its present size.

⁴⁵ Immerzeel 2003 and 2004a. In the vicinity of Homs, mounted saints are present in Deir Mar Musa (Cruikshank Dodd 2001, 50-56, 133-134, Pls IX, X, 27-33; Immerzeel 2004, no. 17, Pls 11, 12, 19, 20), the Church of Mar Sarkis (n. 46; Immerzeel 2004, no. 15, Pls 1, 2), and Deir Mar Ya'qub (Immerzeel 2004, no. 16; Schmidt/Westphalen 2005), both in Qara.

What distinguishes this image is the position of the rider; he is not painted on one of the side walls of the nave, as would normally be the case, but on the east wall. Perhaps he belonged to a pair of juxtaposed mounted saints flanking the apse. Such a composition exists in the Church of Mar Girgis in Deddé (Lebanon), but there the riders (St Theodore and St George?) are depicted on the west wall⁴⁶. The exceptional situation in Homs is explained by the availability of enough space beside the apse for such space-consuming scenes as riders.

The identity of the now vanished rider can only be derived from the brown colour of his horse. This reduces our choice to St Theodore, St Bacchus, or St Demetrius, whose horses are brown; the saints George and Sergius can be excluded since in the Middle East, theirs are always painted in white⁴⁷. There is, however, another option; the horseman could have been the patron saint of the church itself. Nineteenth-century icons render St Elian mounted on a brown horse⁴⁸. The reason for the remarkable admission of a doctor into the heavenly cavalry among warrior saints remains unclear, as none of the written sources about his martyrdom refer to a military background. In this matter, St Elian's status as a *protomartyros*, like, for instance, St George and St Sergius, may have been a contributory factor, but this is merely a suggestion. Be this as it may, the iconography of St Elian as a rider was not a nineteenth-century innovation. In 1598, an icon with this subject was ordered by Patriarch Joachim IV of Antioch, who, before being ordained to the highest office in the Melkite Church in Syria in 1592, was bishop of Homs (Pl. 15)⁴⁹. It was seen inside the church in 1901, but was later sold abroad⁵⁰. Even though this icon is the oldest surviving image of St Elian on horseback, it is possible that it was inspired by an older prototype⁵¹.

Whether the rider in question was St Elian, St Sergius or St Theodore, it is hard to believe that our horseman was not accompanied by others. In this matter, one interesting text from the fifteenth century has come down to us. In 1465-1466, the Russian merchant Basil visited the Middle East, and his account of this journey contains an intriguing passage about his impressions of Homs:

À l'extrémité de la ville s'élève l'église du saint martyr George; près du saint autel repose le saint martyr Julien. Le célèbre martyr George délivra cette ville du



Pl. 15. Icon: St Elian; 1598; private collection (after Căndea 1972, Fig. 1)

*dragon & sauva une vierge; l'église est située près du lac où il baptisa les habitants de la ville & de la caverne d'où sortit le dragon; près du lac s'élève une montagne, de l'autre côté de laquelle se trouve la Mer Blanche; un grand monticule se dresse sur l'endroit où il tua le dragon.*⁵²

In spite of Basil's conviction of having visited a church dedicated to St George, his reference to

⁴⁶ Cruikshank Dodd 2004, no. 24, Pls XCI, XCII, 24.2; Immerzeel 2004a, no. 2, Pl. 21; *idem* 2004b, no. 2; Nordiguian/Voisin 1999, 277-278, 376-377.

⁴⁷ Immerzeel 2004a, Fig. 2.

⁴⁸ Căndea 1972, 225-232, Figs 2-5; see also Immerzeel 1997, 116, no. 43.

⁴⁹ Căndea 1972, Fig. 1.

⁵⁰ Th.I. Uspenski, 'Archeologičeskie pamjatniki Sirii', *Izvestija Russkogo archeologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole*, 7 (1901-1902), 141. The icon was taken from the church around 1930 and entered into a private collection in Paris (Căndea 1972, 225-226). Later on it was sold to Switzerland (Saadé 1974, 31 n. 4).

⁵¹ A probably sixth-century silver plate in a private collection said to be found in Homs, shows a beardless horseman killing a human-headed snake (Mundell Mango 1987, 22). Mundell Mango's suggestion that the saint is St Elian is inspired by its alleged finding-place, rather than by iconographic relevancy.

⁵² Translation in: Baronesse de Khitrowo, *Itinéraires russes en orient*, Genève 1889, 247-248.

St Elian's tomb indicates that he was actually in our church. As the alleged connection between Homs and the miracle of St George's slaying of the dragon is not confirmed by other sources, Basil must have confused his memories about the city's church with the local tradition, which situates this event near the Bay of Junieh near Beirut, on the other side of the Lebanese mountains⁵³. One is inclined to think that he saw the wall paintings inside the church, including the now vanished images of equestrian saints, and may have recognized some familiar elements. According to what is known about the Levantine iconography of mounted saints, there was probably no representation of St George defeating the dragon, but instead, one of him rescuing a young slave and of St Theodore acting as a the dragon-slayer⁵⁴. As a Russian, Basil was acquainted with the story of St George rescuing the princess from the monster, one of the most popular themes in the Russian Orthodox tradition of the fifteenth century. Was he so overwhelmed by his impressions of the Middle East that he mixed up all the details, ending up with what he knew from his own experience?

CONCLUSION

The south apse in the Church of Mar Elian at Homs seems to be a surviving element of a pre-Islamic building, incorporated into the present construction, which was perhaps erected in 1843. Traces of a mosaic inside the half-dome and St Elian's tomb, a late antique sarcophagus that was reworked a few centuries later, are witness to this past. In the second half of the twelfth, or the first half of the thirteenth century, new decoration was applied, traces of which remain inside the apse and on the adjoining east and south walls (layer 1). In the early nineteenth century, the paintings inside the apse were restored by a Palestinian artist, who faithfully copied the medieval composition, very likely with the exception of the two angels beside the *Deisis*, who were turned into anonymous saints (layer 2). On the enlargement of the church in 1843, all the paintings then visible were covered with a layer of plaster, as a result of which they were partly damaged. The paintings were rediscovered in 1970, and all the damaged parts were

restored and retouched. It can be concluded that all the phases are more or less clearly distinguishable, i.e. the impressions of *tesserae*, the paintings of layer 1, the repainting of layer 2, and the retouching in 1970. Nevertheless, additional research is deemed necessary, in particular for a detailed distinction between the medieval and nineteenth-century elements in the apse decoration.

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⁵³ Astruc 1959, with further references.

⁵⁴ Immerzeel 2003, 273-281; *idem* 2004a, 32-34.

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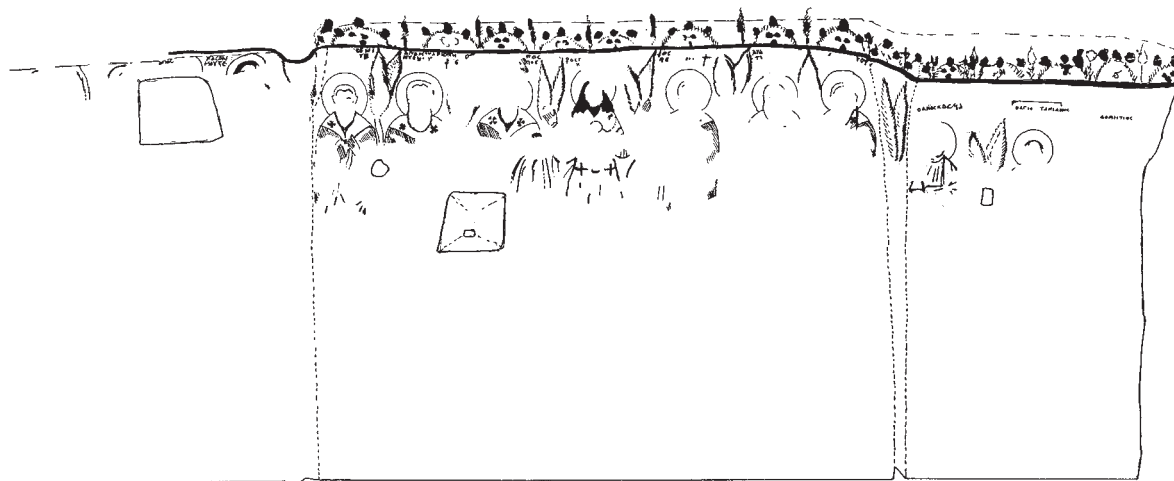
La frise des saints de l'église rupestre de Deir Abou Hennis Correction et addition

Gertrud J.M. VAN LOON, Alain DELATTRE

Le dessin de la fig. 5 dans l'article «La frise des saints de l'église rupestre de Deir Abou Hennis» paru dans *ECA* 1 (p. 107) n'a pas été correctement imprimé. Le voici tel qu'il aurait dû apparaître.

Les auteurs souhaitent aussi mentionner, en addition aux p. 95-96, la représentation très mutilée de Jean Baptiste, avec à sa gauche le texte de Jean 1:29, peinte sur une colonne de la salle des fêtes de Thoutmosis III dans le temple de Karnak (où une église était installée). La représentation, sur une autre colonne, de Sévère d'Antioche, mort en 538

ou 539, donne un *terminus post quem* pour l'ensemble des peintures (Munier H. et M. Pillet 1929, «Les édifices chrétiens de Karnak», *Revue de l'Égypte ancienne* 2, 58-88, en part. 71-73 et fig. 1 et 5; pour l'église dans la salle des fêtes de Karnak, voir Timm, S. 1985, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit* 3 (Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients, Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften) Nr. 41/3), Wiesbaden, 1225-1229 et Grossmann, P. 2002, *Christliche Architektur in Ägypten* (Handbook of Oriental Studies, section 1: The Near and Middle East 62), Leiden, 22, 46 et fig. 166).



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